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## THAILAND: THE NEW SIAM





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# THAILAND THE NEW SIAM

by

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TO  
E.R.O. *and* L.G.K.



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## PREFACE

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The completion of this second study of the nations of south-eastern Asia has synchronized with the outbreak of the second world war, which in all probability coincides with the end of one period of Siamese history. Though it is hard to tell to what extent Siam will be drawn into the international arena, the forces already in the crucible cannot but emerge profoundly modified.

It may well be thought that such a survey might better have been undertaken by those resident in the country, whose knowledge of the Siamese comes from prolonged personal contacts. However, the Siamese themselves have no tradition of objective criticism and no facility for self-revelation; and the foreigners who know Siam best either occupy official positions in the country or conduct commercial or spiritual business there. In either case their pensions or their friendships might be sacrificed by candid commentaries.

Students seeking information about contemporary Siam cannot fail to be struck by the obstacles placed in the way of getting information from qualified observers and from government sources as well. Probably this explains why no complete history of Siam has been written since the revolution. Graham's two-volume work was last revised in 1924; and the only political account written after 1932 was undertaken at the instigation of the Publicity Bureau and tends to over-emphasize the official viewpoint. For information regarding the day-to-day progress made by the new state one must depend on the daily press, which is subject to censorship.

The lack of any other vehicle for such data is the explanation offered for so detailed an account of current political developments. The author would like not so much to excuse her temerity in launching this study as to register her appreciation of its provisional character.

Inasmuch as the country's name was changed to Thailand only



so recently as July 1939, and as it has been known to foreigners as Siam during the period with which almost all of this work deals, the latter name has been retained except in the contemporary account in the Introduction.

It would be impossible to name all the persons from whom the author has received help in collecting material, in the United States as well as in Europe and Siam; but she would like to acknowledge her especial gratitude to Professor Violet Barbour of Vassar College for reading the manuscript, and to Messrs. Graham Fuller and Walter Zimmerman in Bangkok for their thoughtful assistance.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	vii
Introduction	xi

### PART I

I. Geography of Siam	3
II. Peoples of Siam	7
III. History: I. Historical Background	15
IV. History: II. The Era of Transition	30
V. History: III. The Constitutional Régime	62
VI. Foreign Relations	102
VII. Administration	233
VIII. Justice	267
IX. Defense	292

### PART II

X. Land and Population	313
XI. Natural Resources	327
XII. Agriculture	353
XIII. Commerce	411
XIV. Industry	441
XV. Public Works	494

	PAGE
XVI. Finance	541
XVII. Labor	599

## PART III

XVIII. Religion	623
XIX. Social Organization	673
XX. Social Problems	687
XXI. Public Health	698
XXII. Opium	726
XXIII. Culture	744
XXIV. Education	770
XXV. Press and Public Opinion	788
Bibliography and Bibliographical Notes	807
Major Foreign Companies in Siam	831
Siam Newspapers	842
Siamese Periodicals	843
Siamese Weights and Measures	844
Footnotes	845
Index	859

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## INTRODUCTION

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The reported bombing of Bangkok, Thailand's capital, by French planes early in January 1941 was one in a series of incidents that brought a new undeclared war into the headlines of the Western press. Somewhat overshadowed by the struggle in China, the Thai-Indo-Chinese conflict was seen not in its own setting but rather as an obscure part of the larger war. The fact that both the Thais and the Japanese began to take advantage of Indo-China's weakened position in September 1940 created the impression abroad that Thailand's activities were largely the result of Japanese machinations in southeastern Asia. Actually, however, Thailand was agitating for the return of territories that had been vaguely under her suzerainty in the nineteenth century. In view of her national evolution and recent history, it is quite conceivable that she might have seized the opportunity to press her claims even without the simultaneous Japanese putsch.

For the past century Thailand has offered the unique example of a small Asiatic country maintaining her sovereign status while her neighbors have fallen under foreign rule. Her survival has been due less to the innately superior qualities of her people than to the strategy of her leaders, who have played off against each other two powerful and mutually jealous European rivals. By decorous and diplomatic statesmanship in the treacherous international game, Thailand progressively cast off the shackles of a semi-colonial status and transformed an Asiatic feudality into a modern, and in many ways model, state, with official friendship for all and little malice towards any but the Chinese within her frontiers. Only with the revolution of 1932 have there appeared indications of the growth of a more aggressive, supernationalist policy.

The nationalism implicit in the fact that the Thais have always called their country "the land of the free" suggested until

recently only a latent patriotism, which was expressed under the absolute monarchy in alternate waves of emulation of, and disdain for, things foreign. Not until the government of the European-minded princes was violently displaced by that of a handful of middle-class military and civil apprentice-politicians was Thai patriotism vitalized into an economic nationalism which is now spreading beyond the country's political frontiers. To ignore the political aspect would be fatal to any appraisal of the present situation.

When the new rulers of Thailand took over power, they found 95 per cent of the country's business in foreign hands. The public debt, though small and harmless, was held in Great Britain; the administration was riddled with expensive foreign advisers; and rice, the country's mainstay, was handled by the Chinese, who had an even firmer grip on the fishing industry. Teak and rubber, the other major exports, were shared between Europeans and Chinese, the former supplying the capital and technical direction and the latter furnishing the labor and controlling the retailing end. Attempts to alter this situation involved the delicately adjusted relationships with France and England, and, to a far lesser degree until recently, with China. They also met with two internal difficulties arising from the country's poverty and the apathy with which the Thai people regarded any but administrative employment. Furthermore, the revolution in Thailand synchronized with the world economic depression.

On the home front self-sufficiency became the official goal. Thailand was and still is largely a producer of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. The agricultural angle of the problem was the easiest and was consequently the first springboard for the attack. Since the depression was driving home the perils of rice monoculture, the government determined to encourage the production of other foodstuffs—traditionally the second most important item on the import list—by reviving the moribund sugar industry, fostering scientific agricultural methods and animal husbandry, and finally compelling each Thai family to raise sufficient food for its own needs. To reduce further the export of currency and the dependence on

foreign textiles, the major import, the government has made several semi-successful attempts to cultivate cotton and silk on a commercial scale. Industrialization of the country has been the most difficult part of the program to achieve and has been seriously undertaken only recently. All of this policy has involved the replacement of foreign financial and technical development of the country's resources by native capital and labor, and as yet it is too early to prophesy the degree of success likely to be achieved.

The census of 1937 showed that 88.5 per cent of the Thai people were engaged in agriculture or fishing, while only 5.2 per cent had commercial occupations. Agriculture in Thailand has always meant rice cultivation; but the government succeeded by 1939 in driving down the percentage of rice in the total exports to 47.65 per cent as compared with 65.40 per cent a decade before. However, the closing down of world markets, the intensified competition of her two great rice-exporting neighbors, and the recent transportation difficulties have been more effective than government stimulus in diminishing the hold that rice has always had on Thai economy. Government policy has to only a minor extent taken the form of trying to find new markets for Thai rice—notably in Cuba, South Africa, the Philippines, and India—and has concentrated on attempting to relieve the indebted peasantry and to replace the Chinese as middlemen and exporters through the agency of the Thai Rice Company, which began operations in December 1938.

The Thai farmer has become heavily indebted, mainly through lack of capital for his recurring agricultural, social, and fiscal needs, and partly through long-standing habit and inertia—all of which factors have been ably exploited by the Chinese. The cooperative movement, which started languidly under the absolute monarchy, has in the last few years been increasingly encouraged by the administration. Within the past eighteen months the government has allotted Tcs. 1,000,000 out of the new internal loans aggregating Tcs. 25,000,000, for agricultural projects. These projects assign more capital for the existing 1,501 cooperative societies and provide for the creation of two new types: producers' marketing societies, to extend the experi-

ment in marketing paddy to other agricultural produce and the government silo system; and land improvement societies, to give small holders better equipment and more irrigation facilities. A further project consists in the establishment of agricultural colonies, which has involved the settling of new areas and the solution of the problem of poor distribution of land in certain overcrowded regions with infinitely subdivided holdings.

Early in 1940 the government opened an area of 4,000 acres near Lopburi for agricultural colonization by 100 Thai families—the first move in a long-term program to buy 200,000 acres, at a cost of Tcs. 3,000,000, for instalment sales to the poorest stratum of peasantry. This coöperative movement has the psychological advantage of encouraging thrift and group action among a people renowned for uneconomic thriftlessness and individualism, in addition to its major aim of building up national capital. Such capital as has been invested in the slow-growing government savings banks, which were created for the same purpose at the end of 1939, has reached Tcs. 15,300,000, representing an increase of over Tcs. 8,000,000 in the past three years. The increased note circulation, which has shown a marked advance each month since the beginning of the present war in Europe, is further evidence of the undoubtedly augmented wealth of the country.

The long awaited Revenue Code, which became effective in the spring of 1939, has revolutionized the taxation system and has transferred the main burden from the peasant to the commercial class. The importance of this change is apparent from the fact that the administration expects it to result in a 40 per cent rise in government revenues. Many of the direct imposts, such as the poll tax and paddy land rent, have either been abolished or appreciably reduced; they are to be replaced by indirect taxes, an increase in the tariff, and income and business taxes on a wider base. By a curious coincidence this code now leaves the country's administration very largely in the hands of those best able to bear it—the foreign community.

Certain public works, which for years languished in the paper stage, have also aided the Thai farmer. Irrigation works, particularly essential in the great rice-exporting plain of the Menam,

have shown a new vitality. In June 1940 a five-year plan was submitted to the government to complete the seven irrigation projects initiated before the world war, at an estimated cost of Tcs. 21,000,000. The profitable state railroads have been harnessed into service; for example, preferential rates have been granted to the paddy bought by the Thai Rice Company. In cooperation with the new highway-building program, the great northeast has at last been opened up and brought into commercial contact with Bangkok. This most backward area in Thailand is also the region where animal husbandry has been most fully developed. In addition, the Minister of Agriculture has been able in the past year to report progress in checking the spread of rinderpest, which for centuries has impoverished local farmers and periodically halted the export of livestock to Malaya. As yet, however, the government has done little more than mention from time to time that it would like to improve the breed of Thai livestock.

Government encouragement of agricultural self-sufficiency has involved the displacement of foreigners to a far slighter degree than has the country's commercial and industrial policy. Despite the contention of James Andrews in his *Second Rural Economic Survey of Siam* that the nefarious rôle of the Chinese moneylenders has been greatly exaggerated, there is a deep-rooted conviction on the part of all Thais that the Chinese are responsible for the peasants' indebtedness, the poor reputation of Thai rice abroad, and the general lack of indigenous commercial talent. For years under the old régime the Thais were only too delighted to welcome annually thousands of Chinese immigrants, who would supply the country's labor needs and then rise to important positions as wholesale and retail merchants by the display of those very qualities that were conspicuously absent in the Thai people. The advent of Chinese women immigrants, beginning in the 1914-18 period, aggravated the problem of incorporating the Chinese into the Thai body politic; and in the past fifteen years conditions in China have increased both the number of Chinese immigrants and their political activities in Thailand. Finally, with the growth of Thai nationalism, the economic hold of the Chinese on the country has been increas-



ingly stigmatized as a parasitic drain on its resources and as a political danger to the present régime.

In any case, the world depression and the government's policy of autarchy have resulted in a series of increasingly stringent anti-Chinese measures, to the accompaniment of the administration's assurances that they are directed against no one national group but are merely designed to develop Thai abilities. Ever since the last years of the absolute monarchy immigration has been progressively checked by regulations requiring health, financial, and literacy qualifications. Each successive measure increased the revenues but only temporarily checked the inflow, which now averages about 500,000 annually. At the present time immigrants must pay an entry fee of Tcs. 200, register annually with appropriate photographs and stamps, pay a heavy fine if they fail to obtain and carry identity papers, and lay out an additional sum for re-entry permits. The probable establishment of a quota system in the near future is foreshadowed.

Other less direct but even more efficacious measures have undermined the Chinese commercial grip. Starting gradually with the Business Registration Act of 1936, followed by the Trade Marks Control Act two years later, the government acquired for the first time close control and discretionary powers over commercial undertakings throughout the kingdom. Within the past eighteen months a series of further measures, nominally still not discriminatory, have swiftly and devastatingly gone into effect. In the field of labor, long an almost exclusively Chinese preserve, certain business firms are now prohibited from employing more than 25 per cent of Chinese workmen.

The Bird's Nest Concession Act of January 1939 cut short the monopoly of a trade formerly handled solely by and for Chinese; the Food Vending Act of April 1939 affected Thai consumers as well as Chinese vendors; the Salt Act of April 1939 substituted an inefficient government for an exclusively Chinese sales and distribution monopoly; and the Tobacco Act of April 1939, which gave the Government control of the tobacco industry, affected Chinese more than European interests. The Vehicles Act, also passed in April 1939, displaced Chinese by Thai taxi-drivers; the substitution of Thai butchers and retailers of meat

automatically coincided with government assumption of control over all animals to be slaughtered; and finally, the Signboards Act of April 1939 was passed largely to allay the irritation felt by the Thais at the ubiquitous Chinese signs, which gave Bangkok the appearance of a foreign city. The government claimed that these Acts, passed by a large majority in the Assembly and often in secret session, were motivated only by considerations of hygiene or the desire to give Thais greater economic opportunities. Actually, however, they have resulted in leaving thousands of Chinese almost overnight without the means of livelihood; and the Thais have by no means taken advantage of the opportunities thereby created.

These new regulations were shortly followed by an open anti-Chinese drive. The existence of hundreds of private schools dispensing a Chinese education has long been the principal bone of contention between the two communities. The government feels that they have been the greatest obstacle to the assimilation of the Chinese and the chief instrument of Chinese political propaganda. Moreover, Chinese secret societies, which for years had existed illegally but decorously underground, gave evidence of renewed vitality and violence with the outbreak of Sino-Japanese hostilities. Their activities had now become doubly illicit: they were collecting money to be sent to aid the Chinese National Government, and they were aggressively pushing the anti-Japanese boycott. In his report for 1937-38 the Financial Adviser to the Government had inadvertently given Thai officials grist for the anti-Chinese mill by pointing to the un-economic drain on the country's resources resulting from the sharply increasing remittances of Chinese nationals to their home country.

In July 1939 there began a campaign, punctuated by police raids, against Chinese newspaper offices, banks, schools, and secret societies' headquarters, followed by the arrest and deportation of thousands of Chinese, ranging from opium addicts and vagrants to such prominent businessmen as the managers of the Overseas Chinese Bank and the Bank of Canton. Ten of Bangkok's eleven Chinese dailies were suppressed, and thirty Chinese schools were closed. The outbreak of the European war in

September brought a temporary lull, marked by an exchange of amenities in Bangkok between Thai officials and leaders of the Chinese community and followed by an exchange of friendly telegrams with the Chungking Government. China, among the other powers who now were courting Thailand's favor, began to broadcast in the Thai language. The Thai Government, which has complete legal control over local Chinese in the absence of any diplomatic representative, has a certain degree of justification in the contention that its recent severity was in the interests of the local Chinese themselves since there is undeniably a gangster element in the activities of some of the *tongs*. At any rate, the possible consequences and effectiveness of Chinese hostility in the future are factors that Bangkok officials are obviously weighing in formulating their current policy both towards the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese within their gates.

Though the Chinese form the bulk of the laborers in the mining industry, a portion of the foresters in the teak industry, and a majority of the rubber planters, the government's policy of replacing foreign by native industry affects Europeans probably more than it does the Chinese. There are, however, very few large European-owned rubber plantations; and only about a thousand of the Occidentals resident in Thailand are engaged in business—the remainder being either missionaries or government employees.

The teak industry, now on the up-grade after a long unprofitable period, is financed and managed by Europeans, principally the British. In November 1939 all leases to foreigners, with one exception, were renewed for fifteen years. But in the new leases the number of trees granted to each lessee was considerably smaller; the yield of timber will be less remunerative because the areas have been previously worked; and the new government premium of about Tcs. 4 per tree places an additional heavy burden on the industry despite the fact that the royalty rate has remained unchanged. A far larger percentage of the forests has been reserved for working by Thai nationals, and the government's recent acquisition of a number of sawmills forecasts its closing in on this industry.

Tin-making has been less invaded by government control,

not from lack of the will to do so, but because the Chinese are the only skilled laborers available, foreign capital is firmly entrenched, and private Thai capital is as yet uninterested. However, foreign and native capital are not mutually exclusive in this field, since Thailand has regularly under-exported her tin quota. The war has naturally increased the value of this industry; thus in the last three months of 1939 exports rose 144 per cent as compared with the corresponding period of the previous year. In 1939 the ore exported was valued at Tcs. 41,331,359. Given time, the government will control this valuable industry. In fact the direction of the trend was indicated when the Minister of Agriculture some months ago invited tenders for a concession for iron mining and smelting and steel-manufacturing in the province of Krabi. Inevitably the award was made to a Thai firm, which was competing against two Japanese companies. In time the government policy will lead to the breaking of the British monopoly of smelting in Malaya and the elimination of the Chinese middlemen.

Though the government recently announced that it would open a rubber factory, that industry has until now been the least touched of all the major fields. It is principally in the hands of Chinese, who during the depression migrated from Malaya where they had learnt British rubber-growing methods. Rubber exports of 41,266 tons in 1939 were almost double those of 1935 and placed Thailand fourth in rank among the world's rubber exporters.

The handwriting on the wall has for years been sufficiently plain to make many foreign businessmen withdraw and various agencies merge, since they had to contend simultaneously with the depression, intense Japanese competition, and ever-increasing control. The orgy of anti-foreign legislation in the spring of 1939 came to a climax in the sensational liquid fuel issue, which resulted in the withdrawal of the two foreign oil companies from Thailand in the following July. The latter move left the unprepared and inexperienced Oil Fuel Department of the Ministry of Finance to procure and distribute petroleum throughout the country. This would have been hard enough to accomplish under normal circumstances, but the war has aggravated the dif-

ficulties. The main source of supply was diverted to the United States owing to the fact that nearby producers in the Netherlands Indies and Burma were in the hands of the departing companies or their associates. The new course entailed further obstacles as a result of the rise in dollar values of exchange and upward freight rates. Complications have increased as more countries have become involved in hostilities, especially in the case of Denmark and Norway, whose oil-tankers were the main carriers of oil from independent non-competitive sources across the Pacific. In fact many dealers are now kept waiting for their theoretical daily allotment of 400 liters, and bus lines have had to restrict their schedules.

This problem remains serious and has been only superficially solved by the government's attempt to develop local shipping. The Siamese Vessels Act of 1939 originated, ironically enough, in the too successful activities of a British firm, the Siam Steam Packet Company. In December 1938 this firm took over six small Thai companies, won a long-pending lawsuit from one of its two remaining competitors, and ultimately induced the last, almost bankrupt, firm to sell its three largest ships to the Steam Packet Company. The native press was very indignant that shipping had thus passed out of Thai hands, and a few months later an Act was passed providing that henceforth the capital of ship-owning companies must be at least 70 per cent Thai, the crew 75 per cent Thai, and the vessels registered as Thai. This measure, in conjunction with the government's oil control, not only forced the liquidation of the Siam Navigation Company and the Menam Boat Company in June 1940 but also forced the sale of the Siam Steam Packet Company to the government at the latter's price.

As a result the administration now has control of the river and coastal services and has been obliged to send ships into foreign waters. Nominally because of the current shipping shortage, it has organized the Thai Maritime Navigation Company with a capital of Tcs. 10,000,000. The promoters are almost exclusively army and government officials. Its announced intention of purchasing five vessels for freight and passenger service was delayed by the lack of ships available for purchase and by the high cost of construction. Nai Vilas, the manager, finally went to Shanghai and succeeded in

buying two Greek-owned ships, and later two American and one Australian, at a cost of nearly Tcs. 3,000,000. Appropriately enough, the new ships entered service on Thai National Day and were renamed after famous Thai heroines.

For many years the government's policy has been to regulate business from the viewpoint of both profits and labor, but only within the last two years has it entered the competitive field. The trend towards new government industries was probably the outstanding development of 1939. After the early failure to interest private capital in sharing a portion of the expense but none of the control, the government announced its determination to finance the establishment of silk, steel, rubber, cement, paper, and cigarette factories, a textile mill, a soya bean oil distillery, several sugar refineries, a hydroelectric plant, several sawmills and canneries, and new abattoirs. Most of them are being launched under the aegis of the Ministry of Defense, which has undertaken such enterprises to make more palatable the large appropriations that the Assembly has periodically shown itself reluctant to grant. In order to have men qualified eventually to take over the management of these enterprises, the government is not only sending promising students abroad for technical training, but has recently established numerous vocational, commercial, and agricultural schools in Thailand and has given such subjects a prominent place on regular school curricula.

Up to the present the government has made little headway in overcoming the Thai's natural disinclination for anything but administrative employment. Its second and more immediate difficulty has been its inability to secure machinery and equipment for the new factories from abroad. Financially the government is in a very good position to push its program. The new revenue code promises an ample surplus to finance its policy, despite the Financial Adviser's recent warning against further depletion of the Treasury reserve. In addition the present tariff is designed to further the government program by lifting the import duties on whatever contributes to agricultural and industrial development and by raising the duty on the import of food, alcohol, and textiles.

While Thailand's internal irredentism dates principally from the advent of the constitutional régime in 1932, her external irre-

dentism is of more recent vintage. Not that Thailand has not resented the losses she suffered at the hands of Western imperialists in the late nineteenth century. But with the Franco-British guarantee of the neutrality of the Menam Valley in 1896, the burying of rival claims by the members of the Entente Cordiale, and the signing of the Siamese-French Treaty of 1907 and the Siamese-British Treaty of 1909, Thailand's two powerful neighbors seemed to have satisfied their territorial ambitions; and Thailand herself was apparently content to set what remained of her house in order and to concentrate on obtaining international recognition of her full fiscal and sovereign rights. This was progressively accomplished in a series of treaties in the post-war period and consummated in the fourteen agreements signed by Thailand with the foreign powers in 1937.

At first glance it may seem strange that Thai irredentism should be directed more against French Indo-China than towards the richer peninsular provinces that Britain lopped off in 1909. Thailand's claims to sovereignty over Cambodia and Laos have always been vague, except to Thai nationalists; they were disputed by Annam, before the latter's conquest by France, and to a lesser extent by pre-British Burma. Moreover, the territory involved, while more than twice as vast, is nothing like so densely populated or rich in resources as the British-held area. Cambodia's long-standing grievance over her two "lost provinces," including the rich rice fields of Battambang and the world-famous ruins of Angkor, was only redressed in 1907 when France gave them nominally back to her in exchange for the renunciation of French extraterritorial rights in Thailand. Luang Prabang, where France also checked Thailand's expansion in the late nineteenth century, is the capital of Laos, a region of greater potentialities than Cambodia in terms of mineral, forest, and livestock resources. Of the five states comprising the Indo-Chinese Union, Laos is the most backward economically, having a population of only 1,011,695 for an area of 89,320 square miles; but it is peopled by Thais, who are closely related to the Laos of Thailand. Neither of these two areas, which Thailand is now claiming from Indo-China, would be of immediate or vital benefit to her; and one can only conclude that the current Thai demands are due to the flamboyant flowering of

nationalism that has characterized the government of Luang Bipul as well as to resentment at the hurt to her national pride that Thailand has twice suffered at French hands.

Several economic factors furnish a clue to the orientation of Thailand's present claims. First of all, Great Britain is Thailand's neighbor on two frontiers and still possesses the most formidable stronghold in southeastern Asia. Secondly, Thailand's public debt is secured in London. Thirdly, until the outbreak of the European war British shipping came second on the list of tonnage cleared in Bangkok's port. And lastly, in 1939 the British Empire took 40.65 per cent of Thailand's total foreign trade—that of Hongkong representing 4.86 per cent, Penang 14.54 per cent, and Singapore 14.44 per cent.

Unlike those of Britain, France's interests in Thailand have always been almost wholly political, though until 1941 she still retained important missionary, banking, and mining investments. The extension of Thailand's railways to the Indo-Chinese border considerably antedated similar construction on the French lines, work on the final gap at Aranya having been started only this summer. Annamites and Laos have been a valuable source of labor for Thailand, but the communist agitation that has come in the former's wake has proved a source of unrest in Thailand's northeastern provinces. Trade exchanges between the two countries have been negligible because of the similarity of their produce; but commerce with French Laos has always been markedly to Thailand's advantage because of the free zone established in 1893, which was, however, abrogated in 1937, and because of the relative cheapness of merchandise imported through Bangkok as compared with that coming in through Saigon. The provision for the establishment of customs barriers along the Mekong, which was authorized by the 1937 Agreement, has not yet been fully enforced; it was instituted principally to check the brisk smuggling in that area.

The era of good feeling between Thailand and Indo-China began to show signs of breaking down in 1937. For some years France, as well as Britain, has been growing increasingly nervous over the visible rapprochement between Bangkok and Tokyo and the growth of anti-foreign Thai legislation. Alarm in Indo-China itself centered chiefly around Thailand's intensified military pro-



gram. Sensational articles began to appear in both the Parisian and Saigon press relative to Thailand's standing army of 60,000 men and innumerable reserves, her 200 airplanes, and her growing navy, all of which outclassed the Indo-Chinese forces in the same category. The colony began to reflect morbidly on the 1,800 miles of common undefended frontier. Thai maps were reproduced in the French press showing how school children in Thailand were being taught that Laos and Cambodia were part of that country's territorial heritage. In its turn the Thai press became vociferous in publicizing its grievances, to which outbursts Saigon responded in kind. Indo-China began to strengthen her defenses, and there were rumors about the construction of a Maginot Line along the Mekong to meet the Thai menace.

Up to the time of France's collapse in June 1940 there were official attempts by both the Thai and Indo-Chinese Governments to soft-pedal the hostile tone of the press. Goodwill missions were exchanged, and inspired articles were written. There is considerable difference of opinion as to who first proposed the non-aggression pacts with France and Great Britain, but in any case they antedated the outbreak of the European war. France agreed to make an adjustment regarding the islands in the Mekong, and Great Britain was equally obliging about a new and equally insignificant demarcation of the Thai-Burmese frontier. It is important to note that at this time there was no mention of Thailand's irredentist claims.

At the same time Thailand was also negotiating a treaty with Japan. According to this treaty both countries agreed to respect each other's territory, to exchange information on matters of mutual interest, and to refrain from assisting the aggressors if either were attacked. Actually this treaty differed little from the other two and became important only because, by its ratification on December 6, 1940, Thailand was assured that Japan would not support Indo-China in resisting Thai demands. However, whereas the English and French treaties stipulated that in case one of the contracting parties should commit an act of aggression the other could abrogate the treaty at once, the Japanese treaty contained no such provision.

Since the outbreak of the present European war Thailand has

become increasingly important as a producer of raw materials, especially foodstuffs, and as a strategic military base. The retention of her goodwill, at least, has therefore become a factor of no negligible importance. Less than three months were to elapse after the negotiation of the Thai-Japanese treaty before Thailand's claims on Indo-China synchronized with Japanese pressure on Hanoi. This may mean that the agreement entailed a far closer understanding than has before been evident; or it may simply mean that Siam decided that the time was ripe for the launching of a frankly irredentist policy when defeated France could not withstand simultaneous attacks on two of her colony's frontiers.

Twice in the present century Thai-Japanese relations have given the Western powers cause for concern. The emergence of these two hermit, Buddhist nations into the modern world synchronized; and the Japanese treaty of 1889 afforded Thailand the first opening wedge in her fight against extraterritoriality. But despite the anticipation of a closer alliance and the intermittent exchange of amenities, the relations between these two countries experienced no notable development in the period before 1914, when Japanese exports to Thailand barely totaled a million yen. Nevertheless, both England and France at this time were alarmed about Japan's political influence over the Thai rulers.

Trade exchanges between Thailand and Japan were stimulated by the world war, but they lapsed once again after the European belligerents were able to assume their traditional place in Thai economy. Thailand's dependence on Chinese merchants explains why Bangkok's small Japanese colony suffered so severely from the Chinese boycott of 1928-29 in spite of the government's efforts to stop it. The volume of Thailand's trade with Japan just before the revolution was still small compared with that of most other countries. From 1929-32, 85 per cent of all Japan's rice imports came from Thailand; and rice made up almost all of that country's exports to Japan until the imposition of the embargo on all imports of this commodity. On the import side Japan supplied 8 per cent of Thailand's imports in 1929-30, but two years later the depreciated yen advanced the Japanese percentage to 19.4. Altogether, however, Thai-Japanese economic relations attracted little attention in Europe until 1933, when Thailand was the sole mem-

ber of the League that abstained from censuring Japan's action in Manchuria. After that all relations were subjected to close and critical scrutiny; and rumors ran rife regarding the influence that Tokyo was thought to exert in Bangkok, especially in regard to the project of a canal to be cut across the Kra Isthmus.

In the succeeding years goodwill, religious, business, military, and student exchanges between Japan and Thailand brought the two nations very close together; and it was obvious that an important group in the Thai administration was pro-Japanese. But such public opinion as existed felt that Japan had overplayed her hand as big brother to a small Asiatic nation. There was also little inclination to substitute an Oriental for the Occidental tutelage it was taking so long to throw off. Thailand repeatedly denied rumors of a secret understanding with Japan and pointed to her refusal to accord economic concessions in her program of national development. If she placed orders for warships and industrial equipment in Japan and permitted Japanese goods to flood her markets, it was simply because Japan underbid and undersold competitors. Nevertheless, it became increasingly evident that Thailand was being drawn into the Japanese orbit at Britain's expense. Thai-Japanese relations were simply reflecting the shifting balance of power in eastern Asia.

From the military viewpoint, Thailand alone could do little effectively against either of her neighbors, especially in view of her great shortage of fuel oil. But in conjunction with Japan, her army, navy, and air force might prove an important aid against a power harassed by attack on several fronts. As an economic satellite of Japan, Thailand could offer her rice, tin, teak, and rubber exports, whose importance to Japan are indicated by the increased purchases of foodstuffs and minerals that she has made in southeastern Asia in recent months. Thailand's industrialization has not yet advanced to the point where cheap Japanese manufactures and, above all, Japanese machinery and equipment would not find a ready market. Incorporation in the yen bloc would certainly retard the government's program of autarchy, but the current shipping situation and the wars in Europe and Asia will in any case delay its realization. Thailand, like Indo-China, would fit neatly into Japan's economy and would afford an even better spearhead for an advance to the south and west.

With the Oriental repercussions of the French defeat in Europe, the whole situation shaped up rapidly. In July Thai troops were sent to certain points along the Mekong frontier. A flow of refugees from Indo-China into Thailand was represented by the Bangkok press as an indication that the Khmers and Laos wanted to come under the freer Thai rule. The Minister of the Interior denied these allegations, and the French authorities soon put a check to the emigration. The Indo-Chinese piastre fell in the north-eastern provinces but maintained its level in Bangkok thanks to the efforts of the Banque de l'Indochine. In August two prominent Frenchmen were deported from Thailand on a charge of making defamatory comments.

In September 1940 Thailand ratified her pact with Great Britain and at once opened negotiations with France for "the return of what is rightfully hers," adding the threat that unless a territorial adjustment were made Thailand might not ratify her non-aggression treaty. A few weeks before this the Thai Government had announced its intention of dispatching three goodwill missions—one to Europe, one to the British Empire, and one to Japan, the last mentioned of which was also to visit Indo-China. The proposed mission to Europe, which had been unofficially opposed by the British lest it should be in reality an overture to the Axis, never materialized. (Incidentally, when the Thai Premier was accused of giving a fascist salute to the crowd in Bangkok in October, he took this occasion to deny that his country's demands on Indo-China were associated with Axis policy.) The mission to Tokyo, rumored to be an effort to placate Japanese army circles, which had opposed the Thai-Japanese treaty as a product of the Tokyo Foreign Office, received curiously little publicity. The mission to the colonies of the British Empire in the Far and Middle East was at least a social success.

Vichy, which has shown itself malleable to Tokyo's demands for virtual control over northern Indo-China, twice rejected Thailand's claims. The Pétain Government was willing to accord certain minor rights on the Mekong but would entertain no discussion of a general border revision entailing the return of territory to Thailand. Both Thailand and Indo-China mobilized their armed forces along their common frontier, evacuated their peoples from this zone, impeded the movement of population from one side

of the Mekong to the other, and generally brought transfrontier exchange to a halt. Each government accused the other of repeated border violations and maltreatment of the other's nationals in the classic manner, and there were desultory bombings and exchanges of gunfire across the Mekong. In spite of the recent intensification of this undeclared war, there was evidenced a genuine reluctance on both sides to come to real grips.

Evidence is not wanting of a strong resurgence of nationalistic sentiment within Thailand. Reports of demonstrations by students, taxi-drivers, and peasants in Bangkok and the northeastern provinces are curiously reminiscent of the puerile patriotism of 1893. Some of these reports are authentic, and some come via Tokyo. An organization called the Thai Blood Party has been founded to support the government's claims to Indo-Chinese territory. Up to November 1, 1940, the government had received Tcs. 71,772 and applications by 64,158 volunteers to help in the fight for Laos and Cambodian territory. The British, Japanese, and even the French domiciled in Thailand have been reported to be sympathetic to the "modest" Thai demands. However, the most important English newspaper of the region, the *Straits Times*, has counseled caution. There is no use, it contends, in needlessly plunging a peace-loving people like the Thais into a war in which their country may become the catspaw of some foreign power. The Singapore paper doubtless had in mind the relatively easy communications between southern Thailand and northern Malaya and the great strategic advantage that Japan would gain by acquiring air bases in Thailand. Of equal importance in Singapore's thinking is Malaya's dependence upon Thailand for rice supplies.

As for the Chungking Government, it would be more sympathetic to Thailand's nationalistic claims if it did not see Japanese support behind them. Moreover, the recent anti-Chinese measures in Thailand have contributed little toward creating pro-Thai sentiment in Chungking. On the other hand, Chungking has no reason to feel sympathetic towards French Indo-China. The French colony, it is true, has accorded better treatment to its Chinese residents, who, unlike the Chinese in Thailand, enjoy diplomatic representation. But it has shown itself clay in Japanese hands. There are indications that the United States shares Chungking's suspicions of

Japanese support of Thai claims, as illustrated by the detention at Manila of twelve airplanes ordered some months earlier by the Thai Government. The Japanese, it should be noted, subsequently made good this loss to Thailand's air forces.

Thailand's present position is very precarious; it poses the question how much longer she can maintain her century-old policy of avoiding foreign entanglements. The government now has to hold in check the more aggressive nationalistic elements that it has itself unleashed in the country and that have been stimulated by a violent and irresponsible press campaign. The newly established Japanese air base in French Laos is uncomfortably near the Thai border. Though the government officially refuses to believe that Thailand will be affected by Japan's moves in Indo-China, its attitude may change if the Japanese penetrate into Cochin-China and Cambodia. It was undoubtedly greatly to Japan's interest to aid and abet a clash between Thailand and Indo-China that would permit her to "mediate" and establish order.

The terms which Japan has imposed on Indo-China through her "mediation" represent primarily a *succès d'estime* for herself and the Asiatic races in general, rather than a concrete, economic gain or the redress of past injustices for Thailand.

In economic terms the northwestern section of Cambodia which Thailand has obtained is, in all probability, more important than the slice of Laotian territory which France has ceded. One must say "probably" because the sparsely settled region of Laos lost by Indo-China is largely unprospected jungle and mountain land, lacking in means of communication. Historically and geographically this region has always been the economic satellite of northeastern Thailand. Only in the past four years have the French made serious attempts to open up Laos and connect it with the rest of Indo-China.

The area ceded has a certain potential value as forest, grazing and mining land, but the timber concessions which it is rumored that Japan covets are nothing like so valuable as the neighboring teak forests of Thailand. The fact that the big French lumber *Compagnie Est Asiatique* preferred to work Thai Laos' forests in preference to those of French Laos is proof of this. This region undoubtedly also possesses a certain quantity of tin, gold, benzoin

and sticklac, but it is not yet known whether they exist in exportable quantities. They were never sufficiently promising to attract French investors. Their potentialities lie in the distant future, for Thailand conspicuously lacks the capital necessary for the region's development, as shown by her continued, albeit reluctant, dependence on foreign investments within her former frontiers. She also lacks essential technicians, machinery and equipment.

On the grounds of abstract justice, Thailand cannot be said to have realized her aspirations. She has received a territory of roughly 21,000 square miles out of a total of about 90,000 square miles which she claims France took from her. Indo-China's population loss is even smaller proportionately—slightly over a million people out of a total population of over 23 millions. The two main towns of French Laos, Luang Prabang and Vientiane, are still in French hands. Although the Cambodian territory which Thailand has acquired is a region of rich corn and rice culture, boasting the most modern mills in Indo-China, the Cochin-Chinese delta is and always has been far more important from the viewpoint of both rice and rubber cultivation and export. The famous ruins of Angkor, whose restoration is one of the chief glories of French colonization, have not been returned to Thailand, nor has the Tonlé-Sap, one of the greatest fishing regions of southeastern Asia. In short, France still retains the lion's share of what she obtained in 1893 and 1907.

The real French loss has been that of prestige and, inasmuch as in the Orient all Occidentals are looked upon as one people, France's loss of prestige may be considered a blow to the white man's sway in the Far East. The significance of the present treaty lies in terms of a reversal of nineteenth century imperialism, and one that has been enforced under the Japanese aegis. That this is clearly recognized in Indo-China is shown by the assertion of the Saigon French—who have steadily maintained a pro-de Gaulle and anti-Hanoi-Vichy bias—that this is a Franco-Japanese treaty and only incidentally a Thai-Indo-China agreement.

The enhancement of Japan's prestige as peacemaker between a European and an Asiatic power, in a Tokyo-held parley, bolsters her claim to be the dominant power in eastern Asia and may explain her superficially modest economic demands as the price for services rendered. These demands are part of the direct Franco-Japanese

trade negotiations which have been going on in Tokyo since December 1940, as the second phase of the accord reached August 30 between France and Japan in regard to Indo-China. Not yet concluded, they are expected to set up an exchange of Indo-China's exportable surplus of rice, tin, rubber, lead, zinc and tungsten for Japanese manufactured articles, principally textiles.

In view of the avowed Japanese expansionist program in south-eastern Asia, it has been persistently alleged that the Thai-French treaty must contain invisible clauses granting to Japan military and naval bases in both countries. The difficulties of terrain make any but an air attack on China or Burma from such bases virtually impossible. Thailand, however, is linked to both southern Indo-China and northern Malaya by—for that region—good road and rail links, and Japan could feasibly use these means of communication for a land attack on the Malay Peninsula and Singapore. The head of the Thai delegation to Tokyo denied, however, that any special Japanese demands had been made. Further, Japanese forces have not been strengthened in southern Indo-China since January 29.

The French, by bitter reminders of Japan's pledge given last August to respect Indo-China's territorial integrity, have succeeded in having that assurance incorporated into the Thai-French treaty. (France has not denied that she requested Japan to become a party to that settlement by standing guarantor to its terms.) The gain envisaged here—the prevention of further territorial claims on Indo-China by Thailand—is of only slight and immediate value, if it exists at all, since it gives to Japan the right to act should either side claim violation of the treaty's terms. From her point of vantage in the triangle situation of southeastern Asia, Japan has wrested from both belligerents the promise to conclude no agreement with a third power against Japan.

There are plenty of points in the treaty as it apparently stands which may become trouble-breeders: the joint Thai-French administration of the Mekong islands of Khone and Khong, the absence of natural frontiers in Cambodia, the demilitarized zones wherein Thais and Indo-Chinese are to have equal rights and privileges under Thai sovereignty, and the failure to mention the former Franco-Thai Mekong Commission which settled the innumerable



small frontier disputes that arose even in times of comparative good neighborliness. Peaceable settlement of these matters will depend on the mutual good will of the Thai and Indo-China Governments—most unlikely in their present aggrieved states of mind—and ultimately upon enforcement by Japan. Japan's program of southerly expansion makes it inconceivable that she should remain content with the status quo, at least as it is revealed by the published treaty terms.

## PART I



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## I GEOGRAPHY OF SIAM

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The fluidity of her frontiers has been both the cause and effect of the uneasiness that has characterized Siam's foreign relations. Siam lies athwart the main overland route from China to India; but that dangerous accessibility has been balanced by the cultural contributions garnered from travelers, merchants, and missionaries, as well as from the tribes migrating southward along the river valleys. The fundamental similarity of all these tribal migrants, which neither a difference in customs nor perpetual warfare could wholly disguise, had its counterpart in the geography common to their settlements.

Like her neighbors the Shans, Burmese, and Mons to the west, and the Laos and Khmers to the east, Siam is protected by a northern mountain range. In the south, the peninsular island peoples are exposed to seasonal monsoons, which guarantee the rainfall vital to their agriculture. The medley of tribes populating the various river banks not only share a common history and culture; but their crops are identical in corresponding regions, as are their agricultural implements and draft animals. The Mekong furnishes as nearly natural a frontier as Siam can boast; but the effectiveness of this liquid boundary has depended on reinforcement by successive treaties, as have Siam's equally shifting western and southern frontiers.

Siam, with an area of 200,000 square miles, makes up less than a third of the Indo-Chinese peninsula and contains only one of its five major waterways, the Menam, though with her neighbors she shares two others, the Mekong and the Salwin. The country's four main rivers, the Meping, Mewang, Meyom, and Menam, form a network that offers easy communication between the upland and the sea.

Three zones of strongly differing character compose the country's economic structure. The well-watered southern and western

plains are devoted to agriculture; the pastures and forest of the middle zone permit animal husbandry and forest produce; and the mountain plateau, with its capricious rivers, is almost devoid of vegetation. Both the Korat plateau and the Menam plain, which is 300 to 400 feet lower than the former, almost at sea level, are enclosed by high mountain ranges, which converge in the north and keep rising as they cross into Yunnan. The only real alluvial plain is that of the Menam, but it is only 60 miles wide on both sides of the river's mouth and does not extend more than 90 miles into the interior. Its level rises with astonishing deliberation. Bangkok, 23 miles from the coast, is only 6 feet above sea level; Ayuthia, 45 miles away, rises to 12 feet; and Paknampo, 160 miles from the Gulf, achieves a miserly 72 feet in altitude. Such a gradient permits inundation of the whole plain as soon as there is any considerable change in the water level, a change that begins in May; and at least once a year, in the fall, the whole plain is under water long after the climax of the rainy season. Between the hills that rise to the north of this plain there are meagre alluvial valleys where the streams often alter their volume during the rains to the extent of a 30-foot change of level between the rainy and dry seasons. Change of tide can be felt as far as 60 miles inland from the coast.

The Mekong, from where it enters Siam to Vientiane on the northeastern border of the Korat plateau, is navigable only for smaller craft; and except for a stretch of 600 miles from its mouth, where small steamers can be used, it is impracticable as an important trade route. However, Siam is geographically linked with French Indo-China by this common highway, whereas she is cut off from Burma by mountains. The general features of the Siamese countryside are reproduced in Cambodia; and both peoples have shunned the long and varied seacoast, swarming with islands, and fled the solitude of the vast and inaccessible interior, to group themselves along the waterways, which have formed their history and civilization.

### *Plateaux and Mountains*

The Korat plateau, a distended concave level, sloping slightly to the east, with its rim bent inward, was formed by erosion. The southern and western edges are the highest, and its 62,500 square

miles of surface are drained by a solitary river system, the Nan Mun. During the wet season all the lower reaches of its shallow valleys are submerged, and the waters drain off so slowly as to make rice cultivation impossible. By way of compensation, the plateau offers excellent pasture land and valuable salt deposits.

The mountain ranges, which run parallel from north to south, are absent from eastern Siam, and emerge only as isolated offshoots in central Siam. In the west they grudgingly furnish communications with Burma through a few difficult passes. On reaching the peninsula, these mountains spread out to divide the two coasts sharply, leaving gaps of wide alluvial plains, virtually at sea level, overtopped by mountains. The continuation of this range into the adjacent islands proves that the peninsular coast was originally formed by inroads of the sea. The present coastline, however, has been determined by the alluvial material brought down by the rivers, which, like their northern colleagues, have frequently changed their courses to form sandy, slimy areas, where mangrove forests flourish.

### *Climate*

With geographic variations, Siam's rainy season is divided into two parts, marked off by a short dry interval. The rainy season, the period of the southwest monsoon, lasts from the end of April to November; and the dry winter-season wind, coming from the northeast, lasts from November to the middle of February and is succeeded by the hottest weather. Conditions on the west coast of the peninsula are the same as in continental Siam, and most of the coastal trade stops during the monsoon storms. But the climate of the eastern coast differs radically; its rainy season begins in late August and ends in February; it has no distinctively cold season; and rain falls in certain regions throughout the year.

For most of Siam, May is the rainiest month; and on the east coast, where it is most intensive and persistent, the rainfall averages 63 inches a year. The western mountains give central Siam comparatively little rain, and the total amount of rainfall diminishes as one goes north—a phenomenon clearly reflected in the vegetation. The instability of the rainy season in this area, which lasts about seven months but varies between 174 and 236 days, is of vital

importance to the rice-exporting regions. The Korat plateau, where the rainfall averages 50 inches, has a similar though less clear-cut division between dry and rainy seasons; and as it is cut off from sea breezes, high temperatures regularly prevail there. In northern Siam, which gets only the tail-end of the southwestern monsoon, the climate presents the greatest extremes. On the inundated central plain, after the rainy season, the soil dries so rapidly as to permit the transportation of rice to market—a most convenient factor, since by that time the rivers have fallen so low as to be unnavigable. Only after the first rains can the plough be used in a soil that was rocklike but a few days before. By September the rivers have gradually risen to the level of the adjacent plains, which they soon flood. On the duration and rise of these waters the country's economic life depends.

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## II · PEOPLES OF SIAM

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In Siam are found every variety of agricultural and hunting peoples, with the sole exception of the nomadic and grazing types. However, the whole field of prehistoric and racial relations awaits serious investigation, and any current generalization must be regarded as tentative. The first scientific stock-taking of Siam's heterogeneous peoples was appropriately undertaken by the Siam Society in 1920, but the questionnaire then sent out was only indifferently answered.

Enough is known, however, to attest the primordial influence of geography on the different occupations of plainsmen and mountain peoples; even among the latter, differences can be attributed to the varying altitudes. With minor exceptions of certain mixed groupings, Siam's population can for practical purposes be divided into peoples of the mountain, plain, and forest.<sup>1</sup>

Farmers cultivate rice on the inundated surfaces of the plains. The water buffalo is their draft animal, and the bullock furnishes transportation wherever rivers are unnavigable or are dried up during the hot weather. Their forest neighbors form no such homogeneous group and are either hunters or collectors of forest produce cultivating desultory hill rice in the clearings. The mountain peoples also are agricultural; their crops are corn and opium poppies, in addition to the inevitable rice. These people are apparently the newest comers to Siam; and though they have drifted slowly south since 1894, it is only to a distance of about 200 miles. They occupy the high regions only up to 6,000 feet.

The fascinating ethnological mixture that characterizes the peninsula is probably the result of successive immigrations, in the course of which the indigenous negrito population has been virtually exterminated or absorbed. The remnants that have survived are known as Semang and are now confined to the Malay Peninsula, whither they were ultimately driven by the Mongol invaders.



There were four major divisions of Mongol immigrants, of which the second to appear were the Mon-Khmers. They spread all over the country, cultivating with the hoe in the mountains and with the plough in the plains. From the valleys they drove out the older and more primitive Mongol immigrants, who took refuge in the hills; and the plain was thus left far more homogeneous than the mountain regions, which were filled with polyglot tribes. These tribes have survived to the present day and include the Kamuk, Tin, Chao-Nam, and Tshong tribes with larger groups in the north. The Mon-Khmers were left in possession of the plains.

Two other Mongol groups, the Thibeto-Burmans and the Thais, subsequently entered the Indo-Chinese peninsula from two different regions of the north. The Thais, comparatively recent comers, confined themselves to the plains. The Thibeto-Burmans, coming from the northwest, spread over the highest region and have survived in Siam today as the Miao, Yao, and Lahu tribes. In contrast to this southward overland drive from southern China, the current migration from that country is by sea to the south of Siam, and thence along the new means of communication to the north.

The involved linguistic origins of these different tribes have been as inadequately investigated as their ethnology. The languages of the bulk of the population, including the Karens in the extreme northwest, belong to the Siamo-Chinese linguistic group; and the Thai language with its only slightly differing dialects, Lao, Shan, and Lu, is the most important. All of the Thai-speaking peoples probably originated in Yunnan and spread fan-like across Burma and Siam along the major river valleys; and their language was later taken over by the inhabitants already there. Thus the Lawa accepted the Lao language and merged their civilization with that of the invaders; and this was true of all the tribes of the Korat plateau. In the Menam valley the Mons and Khmers accepted the Thai language and civilization.

An analysis of the forest and mountain peoples might appropriately begin with the two dwarf tribes, the Semang and the Katon Luang, who are related to the pygmies of the Philippines. The former, the bulk of whom live in British Malaya, are nomads in southern Siam, where they number only a few hundreds. They are skilful fishermen and courageous hunters with the blow pipe

and poisoned arrows. Staying in places only a few days, they collect roots and herbs but practise no form of cultivation. Their religion is primitive and riteless; they recognize the Thunderer as their god and offer him blood sacrifice by wounds self-inflicted during a storm. A pleasant animism is the cult of flower deities, whose praises are sung in curious songs. Some of these tribes speak the same language, but this is their only tie. Social organization has progressed no further than to recognize that the father is head of his family, but morality among the Semangs is as high as their span of adult life is short. They collect resin and receive rice in a kind of secret exchange. The Siamese Government has taken them under its protection, that is, as far as hopelessly timid and non-taxpaying subjects will permit. King Chulalongkorn was personally interested in them; he kept a young Semang as page at his court until the Bangkok life and climate brought him to an untimely death.

The Katong Luang have been so little known that until a few years ago, when a Danish explorer discovered them, their very existence was doubted. Clothless and in small family groups, they wander about the mountains of the northeast, the south, and the Korat plateau, living in temporary dwellings, from which their Siamese name, savages of the yellow leaf, is derived. They are primitive migrants, whose real name and language are unknown. They are even more elusive than the Semang of the peninsula, and they practise the same kind of secret exchange with their Lao neighbors. Jungle produce is deposited at a kind of secret market-place, where it is later collected by the Laos, who leave tobacco, cloth, iron, and salt in exchange.

The Chao-Nam are primitive Mongols with a language of their own. They are mostly to be found on the west coast, notably the Mergui Peninsula, where they live by pearl-diving and fishing. They migrate according to the seasons but in some instances have forsaken life on their boats for permanent villages along the shore. The nomads sail between the islands and through the mangrove swamps, where they erect windbreaks of palm leaves at night. They and their language are both dying out.

The Tins and Kamuks of the lower northeast mountains are related to the Khas of Indo-China, of which they are really only a

lesser offshoot. Their civilization is influenced by that of their more advanced neighbors, but they differ from the Laos in using only sticks for digging and no oxen for ploughing. They become migratory, the Tins less so than the Kamuks, for trivial reasons like the outbreak of an epidemic or superficial soil exhaustion. Their crops, which are chiefly glutinous rice, are fertilized by burning the forest; and ten years must elapse before the ground can be used again. Since their agricultural technique is of the vaguest, everything depends upon the unstable monsoon. Frequent famines, bringing epidemics in their wake, are somewhat offset by the development of a barter trade. They sell cheap wood to the Laos, who need it for their salt pits, and fruit and fermented tea leaves (*miang*), for which they are paid in rice and salt. Still basically animistic, they have taken on a tinge of Buddhism from the Laos, who un-Buddha-like have maltreated the Khas into an embittered docility. Their Kha relatives in French Indo-China come to Siam every year to supply the teak companies with cheap and excellent labor.

The Lawa are a widespread Mongol tribe conquered by the later Mon invaders in the seventh century, and only a few of them are left in the region between the Meping and Salwin rivers. Mon colonists from Lopburi founded Lampun and Lampang, where they intermarried with their fellow Mongols, the Lawa. Some of the Lawa established themselves in permanent scattered villages on a plateau 7,500 feet in altitude near Chiangmai, where they raise rice, fruit, and vegetables, and indulge in some animal husbandry. They also smelt iron ore, which they formerly mined, and forge it into knives, chains, and spades. The government has capitalized their former gruesome reputation of killing and curing visitors from the south—a reputation that was probably derived from their wild Yunnanese relatives; they have now been transformed into gendarmes and soldiers and are conspicuous for their simple kindness.

The Karens are a group younger than the Laos, living near the Burmese frontier. Only during the last centuries did they forsake their more numerous Burmese relatives and come west and south to cultivate rice fields by the plough in permanent villages situated at high altitudes. Their primitive animism, interlarded with Bud-

dhist and Baptist concepts, their lack of a higher social organization, and their persistent nomadic instincts indicate that only recently have they left the stick-digging level of agriculture for the use of the plough. They are a credulous and kindly people, as suspicious as they are timid, and tend to migrate ever farther into the forest; their sole ambition seems to be that of being left alone. They prefer not to trade but to raise their own food, which, they claim, alone has the taste of freedom. That they are not wholly averse to change is shown by their willingness to be vaccinated against smallpox—though they still wear amulets as double insurance—and by their use of kerosene tins instead of baskets for their perishable produce.

On the Korat plateau exist tribes using the plough, wherever possible, and digging with sticks in the forest clearings. All belong to the Austro-Asiatic linguistic group, that is, to a stratum older than the Thais and one in which many negroid traits are evident; but they are now assimilated to the Laos. Among the more important of these tribes are the Kui, numbering 120,000. Although they have a much lower civilization, they are related to the Khmers, with linguistic differences not only from them but among their scattered selves. The Chao-Nam are another widely separated people who have recently forsaken nomadic life in forest clearings and become more or less assimilated by their more advanced neighbors.

The tribes that cultivate with stick and hoe have certain common characteristics. They cultivate only one crop, mountain rice, with an occasional and insignificant second crop of corn; they never produce fruit or vegetables. No division of labor is practised among them except in the case of the clearing of ground, which is done by the men. Their only commercial crops are *miang* in the north and cardamoms in the southeast. New clearings are made almost every year as migration is still the rule except in regions where there is irrigation. Animism tinged with Buddhism prevails, accompanied by a tendency to adopt civilization whenever it is easily contagious. They have retained intact their original culture in the forest, but on the plains and plateaux they have become assimilated by more aggressive groups.

The cultivated areas in the high mountains begin at about 3,000 feet and are worked by the Miao, Yao, Lissu, and Lahu, recent

immigrants from south China who are still expanding into Siam. The Miao are the largest group of Siam's mountain peoples and have even more numerous relatives in south China and French Indo-China, all of whom invariably live in the high mountains. Their legends, known from Szechuan to Siam, refer to a past of continuous migration from some vast ice-covered plateau into China, whence, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, permanent contention with the Chinese drove them into Siam, where they settled as separate tribes ranging over a vast territory. They differ among themselves as to language, customs, and dress, and have no general organization. Variations in custom are so marked that they are known as red, white, black, or flowery Miaos. Their north-to-south migration trend is reflected in the kind of crops grown by each group. In Yunnan they raise wheat, corn, and millet, but almost no rice, whereas in Siam they have concentrated on rice, with an occasional flyer in corn and opium poppies. Sticks and hoes are used on their uneven and unirrigated ground. The small amount of arable and pasture land in the mountains determines the dimensions of their inaccessible and filthy hamlets. Once a year the men forsake their humdrum lives and go to market to exchange buffalo hides and horns, plants, and illicit opium, for the all-important salt.

Both culturally and physically the Yaos are very similar to the Miaos; but they spread farther east, from Nan as far as Tonkin, shifting their villages every three or four years. They are perhaps even dirtier and more self-sufficing than the Miaos, and more at a loss to use the little money they receive from the sale of their opium.

The Lahu, known also as Musso, live in widely distributed groups between the Mekong and Salwin rivers. The cultivation and smuggling of opium is so vital to their economy that they usually prefer to barter it for food rather than trouble to grow rice themselves. Like so many of these tribes they are animists, with a veneer of Buddhism. The Lissu are more numerous in Yunnan than in the Siamese mountains; and in both countries they cultivate hill rice, corn, and opium poppies, with the hoe and without draft animals.

Among the peoples of the plains there is a much greater uni-

formity of civilization, which is perhaps the product of clearer seasonal demarcation, universal rice cultivation, and plentiful irrigation. A few scattered Mon villages have survived, but not all the plainsmen are descendants of the original inhabitants. Some are war prisoners, but most of them are the offspring of large-scale migrations from Burma in 1660, 1774, and 1814. Their largest settlement is near Bangkok. All of them can speak Siamese, but many cling to their own language as well since they tend to remain segregated in their own communities. But in general, and especially in the east, they have been officially regarded by the Siamese as desirable subjects and have been given land to cultivate in return for their military service. They are mostly farmers and boatmen, but a few among them have risen high in government service.

Two groups whose importance is quite different from that of the primitive Mongolian tribes are the Khmers and Annamites. Concentrated in eastern Siam, they number about 160,000, most of them being farmers with small holdings in Siam. They are called Yuan and are to be found chiefly in Chantabun and Bangkok. The group at Chantabun consists of descendants of Catholic Annamites who fled from persecution in their own country in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The Bangkok Annamites are the offspring of war prisoners, whom the missionaries taught to bear arms in the service of the king of Siam. Unlike the Khmers in the rural regions, they are uncompromisingly unassimilable and retain their own dress and language, in spite of which the tolerant Siamese have employed them not infrequently in government service.

Although the 400,000 Malays living along Siam's southern frontier are less Mongolian than the Thais, they differ from them far more culturally than racially. Their language is Austro-Asian; and their religion, Islam, was brought to them as recently as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Islam among the Siamese Malays, however, is so diluted that for generations Pattani was ruled by women. Though they abide by none of the harem regulations, they have kept the Prophet's prohibition against drinking and gambling and are a more law-abiding element than the Siamese themselves. More than 500 years ago Malays from Malacca wandered into the northern part of the peninsula, where they settled at the indignant expense of the indigenous peoples. They extended

their power aggressively and increased their numbers by intermarrying with the women they found in the region, having thoughtfully eliminated male competition. However, they confined themselves to the coast and plains, where they lived as farmers and fishermen; and the tribes ousted from the occupied areas were able to survive in the nearby mountains.

By her treaty of 1909 with Great Britain, Siam lost more than half of her Malay population. Most of the Malays who still live in the peninsula have expanded farther north along the west coast to Phuket Island; but there are also small Malay communities in Chantabun, Ayuthia, and Bangkok, the descendants of war prisoners.

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### III · HISTORY

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#### I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

##### *Early History*<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the Thai race is one of those moot points relished by scholars. The most important contribution of recent years has been the revolutionary theory evolved by Dr. W. Credner as the result of his expedition in 1930 through the province of Yunnan to discover the site of the first Thai capital, Nan-Chao. Dr. Credner came to the conclusion that the Thais had not reached Yunnan by infiltration from the north, but rather that they had probably drifted south and west from Kwangsi and Kwangtung, always keeping to the tropical regions, which suited their manner of living, and avoiding the hills and high plateaux.<sup>2</sup> The Tali region has probably never sheltered Thais.

Lao tribes are mentioned by Chinese annalists as living in the Yangtse valley about 2,000 B.C. The Nan-Chao kingdom was probably created by a conquering Thai prince Piloko (728-748) from southern Yunnan, as a stronghold against the hostile Thibetans.<sup>3</sup> The Thais are the most numerous and widely distributed race in southeastern Asia, where they still live; they are separated from one another by high mountain ranges, and many of them ignore even the existence of their distant relations. There is no evidence that their civilization was ever at a higher stage of development than it is at present. Throughout their history they have frittered away their strength by subdividing into petty states instead of combining into a strong empire. They now live under four different flags—Chinese, French, British, and Siamese.

Only recently has this inland people come into contact with the sea and with the West; formerly they knew only less evolved tribes, which they could easily assimilate; and their new and stimulating contacts are still bringing out qualities that have long lain dormant in them. Their cultural integrity is proved by the survival



of their language in China 800 years after they lost their independence there. It is now spoken by all Thais with only dialectal variations.<sup>4</sup> Their long history and numerous legends, dating back 3,000 years, in addition to certain distinctive traits, differentiate this people from neighboring races.

The Thais migrated south from Nan-Chao under pressure from the Chinese of the north, but even before this the search for milder climates had for several centuries precipitated various migrations. The important Thai state of Yunnan, which at one time ruled from Assam to Tonkin, lasted six centuries, despite incessant struggles with the Tibetans to the west and north and with the Chinese to the northeast. This state was finally destroyed in 1253 by Kublai Khan, in the course of his march to the south. This conquest greatly augmented the number of Thais in the Menam valley just at the time when the Khmer empire had passed the pinnacle of its greatness. Yet to this day about 4,000,000 of the approximately 23,000,000 extant Thais live in the remote valleys of southern China; those in Kwangtung and Kwangsi, however, have been wholly assimilated to the Chinese. Trans-frontier and inter-valley migrations still occur; but usually tribes cross into Siam simply for trading purposes or as seasonal laborers and return home on completion of their business.

Long before the fall of Nan-Chao, Thai infiltration into what are now Burma, Siam, and French Indo-China laid the foundations for the development of a new Thai state, which was fostered by the isolated valleys and river basins in which the Thais settled. They steadily gained possession of more and more rice fields, using the people they dispossessed as fighting forces for this purpose, and systematically colonized the newly acquired regions. In the thirteenth century they conquered the north and central plains and drove a wedge between the two great branches of the Mon-Khmer group, whom they refrained from exterminating and assimilated as far as possible. In the fourteenth century they conquered the Menam valley and the adjacent plains, which gave them the core of their present state.

The Thais carried with them into these new rice fields the political organization of the Chinese and founded walled towns that were both fortresses and administrative centres. But their towns

never developed as commercial and cultural centres like their Chinese prototypes because of their smaller agricultural surplus. The Chinese pattern, nevertheless, gave them an advantage over the less organized Mon-Khmer groups.

The Laos are as Thai as the Siamese and have acquired a separate name because the land that they came to hold had been formerly occupied by the Lawa. The Chinese annalists, for descriptive purposes, divided the lands held by the Thais into two regions, saying that the soil of Sien (the Lao country) was sterile and unfit for agriculture, whereas that of Sayam was very fertile.<sup>5</sup> ✓

The adjectives "black" and "white" applied to the Laos are derived from their tastes in tattooing, but they also indicate different geographical habitats. The Laos of the Mekong have been settled there longer than the Laos of northern Siam. Formerly the Lao States were divided in vassalage between Siam, Cambodia, and even Burma; and their hereditary chieftains warred incessantly with each other. The varying political fortunes of the Laos are shown in the linguistic and cultural residuc." Burmese influence survives in Lao rites and customs and in an art that easily ranks with that of the Siamese. The written Lao language is like Shan, and the spoken dialect is like Siamese but with fewer Pali and Sanskrit words. "

The Shans, called Ngiou, or Thai-Yai, by the Siamese, have long filtered into Siam as peddlers and gem miners. In the north, about the sixth century, they formed a mysterious state known to the Chinese annalists as the kingdom of Pong. Small colonies of them exist in the north and at Chantabun and Korat. Their language has evolved less than that of their Lao or Siamese relatives. The Lu are still another Thai group, who have come comparatively recently into Siam; they are tattooed like the Laos, and their Buddhism is an even more thinly disguised animism than that of the other northern Thais.

### *Pre-Thai Siam*

The early Khmers, who settled along the coast from the Irrawaddy to the Mekong about the ninth century B.C., were a crude people whose remarkable potentialities were awakened only by contact with Indian culture. In 307 B.C. the Indian Buddhist king

Asoka of Magadha, after his conquest of the kingdom of Salunga in southern India, presided over a great Council at Patahputta. Not only was Buddhism purified thereat, but the pious king initiated a missionary campaign, which included the countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

Stone inscriptions found in the region occupied by the earliest Khmers reveal the south Indian origin of their creators; thus the first important Indianization of the region was apparently due to those colonies founded along the seacoast by Asoka's envoys. Nevertheless, it is not certain whether Buddhism was preceded there by Brahmanism, imported by another group of Indian immigrants, although Brahma's followers were never actuated by the same missionary impulses as were the Buddhists. The introduction of their religion was chiefly by contagion.

About the second century A.D. Further India's Buddhism was reinforced by a second missionary effort, also under royal impulsion, which imprinted the Cinghalese or Hinayana form of Buddhism on the Indo-Chinese peninsula. It was accompanied by Sanskrit as its linguistic vehicle. But in time the new missionaries' influence was corrupted by Brahmanic practices and superstitions, many of which have survived in the current Buddhism of this region. The royal Khmer faith, fluctuating between Brahma and Buddha, eventually leaned towards the latter; but both religions continued to live harmoniously side by side, superimposed on a deep-rooted, widespread animism. The resultant religious hybrid was ploughed under—officially—by the Burmese king Anarutha, when he tried to make Buddhist practices uniform in Siam as well as in Burma in the eleventh century.

The Thais, penetrating into the Khmer empire through the Mekong and Menam valleys in increasing numbers, brought with them the Sinicized organization of their Yunnan state, along with qualities that years of resistance as a buffer state between China and Thibet had strengthened. Chinese chroniclers of the Tan Dynasty, and Marco Polo, who wrote of Nan-Chao about 1272, have described the high degree of organization it acquired; the administration, dress, and customs were all modeled after the Chinese. All adult males were required to do military service; the land was divided according to the size and rank of families; the

people wove cotton and silk and mined gold. Taxes were paid in rice, but forced labor was probably not practised. Their religion bore a vague relation to Mahayana Buddhism, which must have antedated their adoption of the Cinghalese version. Nan-Chao contained the nucleus of the fundamental organization that Siam later developed.

By intermarrying with the Mon-Khmers and Lawas whom they found in what is now northern Siam, the Thais acquired much of the culture of the former group. But histories of this period are too fabulous to be instructive about the extent of their eclecticism. According to such suspect sources, the shadow of a Thai kingdom was formed in northern Siam during the ninth century under the legendary Prince Prohm; and about the same time another State developed, which later became Luang-Prabang.

In the eleventh century King Anarutha the Great of Pagan attacked the waning Khmer power and succeeded temporarily in ruling over the Menam valley. By furthering the decline of the already decadent Khmers, this king inadvertently helped Thai independence; and by the time Anarutha's power had declined, the petty Thai states were in a position to throw off the Khmer yoke.

Phra Ruang was the fabulous hero who delivered his people from the Khmers. Legend has it that he was of humble birth, the son of an official in charge of carting water from the famous springs at Lopburi to Angkor Thom for the Khmer king's personal use. Phra Ruang showed so alarming a capacity for transporting water in ordinary baskets that he was considered too potentially dangerous a subject; but he managed to reach a Sukhothai monastery in safety, one jump ahead of royal vengeance. After a suitable interval he set about stirring up his fellow Thais, and in 1238 he and another chieftain defeated the Khmer general sent out to put an end to the current Thai unrest. After their victory the Thai leader entered the northern capital of the Cambodian empire, Sukhothai, where the title of king was conferred upon him.

The kingdom of Sukhothai, though ephemeral, was brilliant enough to become celebrated in Thai tradition. Its founder, Phra Ruang, devoted the rest of his life to extending its frontiers at Khmer expense and to building colossal pagodas for the greater glory of Buddha.

Among his descendants was the great warrior king Ram Gamheng, who came to the throne in 1275. During his forty years' reign he extended his sway to include the Bay of Bengal, Luang Prabang, and the Malay Peninsula, and maintained friendship with the other Thai kingdoms, notably Chiengmai, which he helped against their mutual foes. His reign, as narrated in Burmese and Chinese annals, had a significance greater than that of his bellicose exploits; for it was during this period that Kublai Khan, who must have mellowed by this time, opened direct conciliatory relations with his southern neighbors, among them Siam, to which the Chinese in their pride always referred as a vassal state.

Following a peace treaty between the two countries in 1282, the king of Sukhothai twice visited China. On the second occasion, about 1,300, he brought back some Chinese potters, who were responsible for the later famous Sawanoloke ware. An even more important cultural contribution was his adaptation of the Khmer alphabet to the Siamese language. Probably by that time the Chinese characters, which the Thais had used at Nan-Chao, had either been forgotten or supplanted by variations of the Khmer alphabet used in different Thai states.

After the death of Ram Gamheng his state fell apart; especially important was the secession of Tavoy and Tenasserim, which the king of Pegu took with him. But the greatest disrupting force was a new power rising within the Thai state itself, the principality of Utong. Its prince, who later took the name of Rama Tibodi, not only conquered Sukhothai but added to his territories the Khmer possessions of Lopburi and Chantabun. Sukhothai's last kings had to console themselves with a reputation for piety and to forget the empire of their ancestors, which had survived only a century and a half.

Utong was soon abandoned as the centre of the Thai state because of an epidemic, and a new capital was established at Ayuthia in 1350. There the history of modern Siam begins, although fifty years more were required to consolidate Rama Tibodi's new state. Ayuthia became so great a town that its name was often used to designate the whole country, even after Bangkok became the capital. The successive displacements of Siam's capital, always in the direction of the sea, marked the country's progress

towards a united kingdom, though this progress was retarded by six centuries of quarrels between tribes and warfare with neighbors. If peace and stability were lacking whereby an indigenous Siamese culture might have been developed, Siam's star on the whole was in the ascendant throughout her history. She was usually able to keep her warlike neighbors at bay and to maintain profitable commercial relations with Japan, China, and India.

Rama Tibodi, not content with extinguishing Sukhothai and extending his domain to Malacca, was the first of many Siamese kings to invade the fellow Thai state of Lannatai, or Chiangmai. In 1393 the fall of Angkor, Siam's former liege state, marked the greatest of all victories for the Thais; and the subsequent transplantation of 90,000 Cambodian prisoners into Siam virtually brought to an end the Khmer menace to the rising Thai power. The fifteenth century was notable for alternating and inconclusive invasions of and by Chiangmai and Cambodia, interspersed with civil strife over the throne of Ayuthia and accompanied by famines and epidemics. Cholera was recorded for the first time in the kingdom in 1357, and a century later the country was scourged by a terrible outbreak of smallpox.

King Trailok (1448-1488) was the dominant figure during this period. Like the great Rama Tibodi, he was outstanding both as warrior and legislator. In the first year of his reign he reorganized the administration in the country's first attempt at centralization. Heretofore a loose feudal federation had permitted petty princes to govern almost independent states, levying their own armies and administering their own chaotic finances. Trailok separated the civil from the military among his Ayuthian officials, regulated the amount of land assigned to each office by way of salary, and retained the old Thai principle of universal military service. His successor, Rama Tibodi II, continued the process of military reorganization; and in 1518 the first book on military tactics was issued. The system evolved in his time remained in force until 1899.

After his manifold wars, King Trailok retired to a monastery in 1465—an event so unusual that his chief enemies and neighbors thankfully came to witness his ordination. But the king found he could not stay long out of the fray and emerged again a year later to resume his war with Chiangmai. In 1488, the year of his death,

he captured Tavoy, a place later significant as the first battleground in the series of wars between Siam and Burma that were to last intermittently for three centuries. In the sixteenth century Burma assumed the rôle Chiengmai had played in the fifteenth century—that of chief antagonist of Siam.

### *Sixteenth Century*

Rama Tibodi II, in an outstanding reign, continued the policy of incessant warfare with Chiengmai, to the usual accompaniment of civil strife and famine, and proceeded to perfect the military and administrative reorganization of his kingdom. His great innovation was to make the first treaty with a European power, Portugal. Thereafter Portuguese mercenaries became a regular feature in the Siamese army, which they trained in the use and manufacture of firearms. The next king, Prajai, was unfortunate in his Chiengmai expeditions; but he defeated the increasingly aggressive Burmese, largely through the aid of these Portuguese mercenaries. A great fire, which destroyed a third of Ayuthia in 1545, put an end temporarily to foreign strife.

The second half of the sixteenth century witnessed an involved series of palace intrigues and rebellions, which the king of Burma naturally turned to his advantage. In 1549 occurred the first of many Burmese sieges of Ayuthia, which ended in the retreat of the invaders more as a result of lack of provisions and serious unrest in Burma itself than of the prowess displayed by the besieged. However, the Siamese were aroused by this experience to fortify Ayuthia, to reorganize the army and navy, and to deal summarily with Cambodia, which was again becoming obstreperous. It was during this period of Burmese aggressiveness that Chiengmai succumbed to an attack that ended the independence of that Thai state and gave the Burmese a great strategic advantage in fighting Siam. It drew the Laos definitely within the Burmese orbit, where they remained until the nineteenth century.

This century saw also the advent of white elephants as disturbing factors in the life of the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. Aside from their rôle in warfare, they were regarded as the favored habitat of a future Buddha, whose possession was intimately linked to the country's prosperity. Thus the king of Pegu, in 1548, became so

angered to learn that his colleague in Siam was the owner of seven of these rare creatures, that he opened a campaign that netted him four of them. To this day these invaluable animals are not allowed to remain in private ownership; thus, in the treaty with Cambodia made in 1853, the tributary state agreed to deliver any white elephants found within its frontiers to its Siamese suzerain.

The Burmese were not the only people troubling weakened Siam at this time. The Raja of Pattani was barely prevented from following up Burma's advantage and seizing the throne of Ayuthia. Vientiane, too, was showing signs of rebellious irritation over its king's marriage to a Siamese princess.

In 1568 the largest Burmese army that had as yet invaded Siam succeeded after a year's siege in capturing Ayuthia, through the incompetence and treachery of those within her walls. Most of Ayuthia's population was removed; the town's fortifications were destroyed; and the new Siamese king was crowned as vassal to Burma. During her succeeding fifteen years of vassalage, Siam showed the amazing recuperative powers that have subsequently made her famous.

Under Burma's suzerainty many Burmese laws and institutions, notably the Laws of Manu and the Burmese calendar, were introduced into Siam through the agency of officials installed in depleted Ayuthia. During this period also the Cambodians, spurred on by the weakened condition of their ancient rival, carried out a series of invasions of Siam; but this at least gave the Siamese an excuse for strengthening Ayuthia's defenses, to which the Burmese gave reluctant consent.

During these Cambodian razzias, the future warrior hero of Siam, Naresuan the Great, of the old royal line of Ayuthia, was laying the foundations for revolt. He had been carried off among the princely hostages to the Burmese court, where he had made himself useful in putting down revolts. In addition to his successes against the Khmers, he was victorious also in the Shan States. Returning to the Burmese court after the death of the able king Bhurang Nong, he decided that the time was now ripe for Siam to regain her freedom. The condition of the common people of Siam at this time was probably the lowest in the country's history. The north in particular had been depleted by the transplantation of



prisoners, and the whole land was wasted by war as well as by the tribute that it was forced to pay to Burma. The Siamese centred their hopes of *risorgimento* in Naresuan.

During a struggle between the king of Burma and the Prince of Ava, Naresuan, who had returned to Siam, managed to inflict on the former his first defeat at the hands of Siam in many years. So great was the reversal that even Cambodia threw in her lot temporarily on the side of Siam. Their joint conquest of Chiengmai gave Siam enough prisoners with which to colonize her depopulated lands. Ayuthia was prepared to withstand the inevitable siege, which lasted from January to May 1587. Losses in battle and through disease and famine finally forced the Burmese to withdraw. Simultaneously, a Cambodian invasion was turned back to such advantage that two Khmer provinces, Battambang and Pursat, later famous in Franco-Siamese relations, were acquired by the Siamese, who left a garrison in the country.

In the years following Naresuan's accession, the Burmese made several attempts to resubjugate the Siamese. The dramatic climax came in a duel in which Naresuan slew the Burmese Crown Prince, thus discouraging his compatriots from returning to Siam for many years. When the Peguans revolted against Burma, Naresuan joined forces with them and subsequently incorporated a good part of Pegu within his own domains. This Peguan revolt was the beginning of a period of internal disorder, which weakened Burma vis-à-vis Siam, now a united power for the first time in years. In spite of this, Naresuan's successive invasions of Burma were not very fruitful, although they precipitated Burma's disintegration into the three separate kingdoms of Ava, Taunga, and Prome. Only Cambodia remained troublesome to Siam, and all Pegu and three of the nineteen Shan States now came under Naresuan's rule.

### *Seventeenth Century*

The seventeenth century ushered in the period of Siam's all-important relations with European powers. After the Portuguese had captured Malacca in 1511, they sent two embassies to Ayuthia to establish trade relations there and in Pattani. Their useful services as mercenaries in Siam's wars earned them further commercial privileges in 1568, and much later the right to worship as they

pleased. In 1598 Siam made a treaty with the Spaniards of Manila, but it led to no extensive trade relations.

During the reign of King Alakotsarot, Naresuan's successor, Dutch ships and merchants began to visit Siam; and for their part the Siamese sent ambassadors to Acheen (1602), Goa (1607), and Holland (1608). The Siamese kings favored embassies because they regarded the advent of an envoy as equivalent to receiving homage from the government he represented, and they tried to keep them as long as possible to prolong the honor. In the reign of the next king, Songtam the Just, commercial relations were opened with the English; and since by that time the Japanese had begun to settle in the country in large numbers, foreign trade became very brisk. Unfortunately, however, Burma began giving Siam trouble again, with the result that the latter lost Pegu but retained her Tenasserim possessions. Since Chiangmai was still the battleground of their disputes, foreign trade in the Lao capital was brought to a standstill, as the English merchants discovered when they tried to open up a trading post in the north.

Because Portuguese and other European adventurers were beginning to play an important rôle in all the armies of Further India at this time, Siam's kings began to concentrate on acquiring European aid in their perennial campaigns. After the death of King Songtam, a palace revolution brought in its wake the usual Cambodian invasion, a revolt of two Malay tributaries, Pattani and Sritemmerat, and the rebellion of the Japanese of Ayuthia. In quelling Pattani's disorders, the Dutch, in return for commercial privileges, came to play a small and fitful rôle in the pay of Prasat Tong, Siam's first usurper king.

His cruel and violent reign was succeeded by further upheavals. Within three months two kings were murdered; and Phra Narai, who eventually fought his way to the throne, was none too secure in view of the unsettled condition of his country. The most reassuring factor was that Burma was having trouble with the Chinese Empire, whose forces besieged Ava in 1659, while Cambodia was disturbed by Annamite invasions. Nevertheless, Phra Narai undertook the usual Chiangmai campaign with the customary negative results.

The outstanding event of Phra Narai's reign was the phenom-

enal rise to power of the Greek adventurer, Phaulkon, which in turn led to the French bid for power in Siam. The Portuguese and Dutch had proved so quarrelsome and demanding that the Siamese king turned to the most recent European comers to the country—the French—to offset their influence and power. A series of dazzling embassies were exchanged with the Court of Versailles, and trading and religious privileges were bestowed on the French in Siam; but when their rôle assumed military proportions, some of the Siamese aristocracy rose up and overthrew the king and eliminated Phaulkon and his allies from the Siamese scene. The English remained passive throughout most of this century. They were preoccupied elsewhere and found Siam's trade too irregularly profitable to put either much energy or money into the country. The Dutch were the only survivors of the French holocaust, but their renewed privileges were shortlived. For almost a century and a half Siam cut herself off from contacts with the West.

### *Eighteenth Century*

The post-Phaulkon period was one of too great political unrest for serious trade. Plots and counter-plots, revolts in Korat and Nakon Sritemmerat, and armed intervention in Luang Prabang and Cambodia were partly the result of foreign troubles but chiefly traceable to the royal habit of tampering with the laws of kingly succession. Buddhism proved no hindrance to this violence. The defeated candidate for the throne was murdered with all his relatives; or if he voluntarily withdrew from the struggle, it was to the only comparative safety of a monastery. In 1733 a Chinese uprising was put down and its leaders executed in the wholesale fashion that characterized the disposal of unsuccessful Oriental revolts. Yet this period, one of prolonged peace with Siam's neighbors, made for the happiness of the common people, who were not affected by palace revolutions. The reign of King Boromakot (1730-58) was called the golden age of Siam. There were no serious wars; and there was even a slight veering of foreign policy towards Burma and against Pegu, which was accompanied by an exchange of embassies with the former.

But in 1759 the perennial quarrel with Burma took a new turn when Tenasserim was captured by the ambitious King Alaunpaya,

who had already reduced to vassalage the Lao States of the north—Nan, Chiengsen, and Payao. By using the southern instead of the usual frontier route of attack on Ayuthia, he surprised the Siamese, who were both militarily and psychologically unprepared to resist after so many years of peace.

The first siege of Ayuthia, in 1760, failed through an accident that caused the death of the Burmese king; but Siam did not learn all she might have from this providential lesson. Two years later the Burmese returned to the attack, this time shifting the scene to Chiengmai and Luang Prabang, where they established their hold over those Lao states. The next year they once more used the peninsular route. After taking Tavoy, they were temporarily held in check by an army under the Sino-Siamese general, Phya Tak, the future deliverer of the country. But soon afterwards three Burmese armies were advancing on the capital, from which they were only temporarily deflected by a revolt in Chiengmai. By 1764 this was suppressed, and the Burmese were ready for their march on Ayuthia. Another army from Tenasserim simultaneously converged on the Siamese capital.

As before, Ayuthia's resistance was weakened by corruption and disunity from within. On April 7, 1767, it was again captured, after being besieged fourteen months, but not before Phya Tak with 500 of his followers had escaped from the doomed city. The vandalism of the victors spared neither the people nor the invaluable records within the city walls. The Siamese, whose numbers have been variously estimated at anywhere between 30,000 and 200,000, were taken prisoner to Burma. The Burmese were not content, as in their previous triumph, to reduce Siam to vassalage. This surrender meant the complete abasement of their old enemy, whose ruin was to be spiritual as well as physical. But Phya Tak and his band of survivors were the unknown quantity with which the Burmese had not reckoned.

Having reached the eastern shore of the Gulf of Siam, Phya Tak acquired control over the surrounding district, which had been neither despoiled nor depopulated by warfare. He soon became the rallying point for all resistance to Burmese domination, and by the fall of 1767 he felt himself strong enough to take the offensive. He captured Bangkok and made himself popular there by distribut-

ing food and money to the starving people, who gratefully crowned him king; and since the restoration of Ayuthia would have been too costly and prolonged a task, he made Bangkok the new capital.

Phya Tak was favored by a simultaneous Chinese invasion of Burma, which enabled him to consolidate his power at the expense of the semi-independent governors of Siam's five major provinces, whose claims, though not abilities, equaled his own. He captured Ratburi, destroyed the power of the Burmese fleet, and, after a few reverses, finally subdued the governors of Pitsanuloke and Korat. He then turned his attention towards restoring order in the country and in so doing enhanced his popularity, although he was regarded officially as a deserter, a semi-foreigner, and an upstart.

Resuming his military offensive, Phya Tak pressed on to retake the Cambodian provinces of Battambang and Siemreap, whence he turned south again to Sritemmerat. The year 1769 found him once more in the north putting down opposition there. He had now regained control over the same realm as had been ruled by the kings of Ayuthia, except for Tenasscrim and Tavoy. So completely did he take over the old traditions that he was soon embroiled in the customary campaigns against Chiengmai and Cambodia, Burma being occupied all the while with the Chinese. By 1773, when the Burmese were free to deal with their eastern neighbor again, Phya Tak was able to drive them back.

After he had thus crowned his work as savior of Siam, Phya Tak developed eccentricities to such a point of madness that his Ministers regretfully had him executed. A substitute was found in the popular General Chakkri, who had returned victorious in 1782 from his Cambodian campaign. This king (1782-1809) became the founder of the present dynasty, first taking the title Phra Buddha Yotfa, and later that of Rama I. He founded the present capital at Bangkok, or Krungdeb, on the east bank of the Menam. Following Phya Tak's lead, he tried to restore the old Ayuthian institutions, called back former officials, and salvaged what remained of the few laws and records that had not been destroyed in Ayuthia's fall. Inevitably the Burmese gave him trouble; in 1785 they again invaded Siam, Tavoy being the chief scene of the struggle. The following year another invasion, this time from the north,

was repulsed. Not until 1802 were the Burmese finally expelled from northern Siam, and Siam's supremacy fairly well established throughout the Lao states. It was during Rama I's reign that the Sultan of Kedah, fearing a Siamese attack, leased Penang to the English East India Company on terms so vague that for years they were the cause of international trouble.

Rama II possessed sufficient military skill to cope with another Burmese invasion of the peninsula in 1810. Since the Sultan of Kedah was suspected by the Siamese of having abetted the Burmese in this and another threatened invasion in 1819, the Siamese king instigated a punitive expedition against him, which had surprisingly far-reaching consequences. It caused bad feeling with the British, now well in the Malayan saddle, a sentiment that persists to this day; but its immediate result was the Crawford Mission to Siam in 1822. The first Anglo-Burmese War, two years later, resulted in Great Britain's establishment in Burma, which finally put an end to that country's continuous warfare with Siam.

It was not until 1859 that France threw up her bulwark to the east, in Cochin-China and Cambodia and later Laos, which was in time to include some of Siam's eastern provinces. By 1885, as a result of the aggressiveness of her European neighbors, Siam was a weak country, virtually isolated, and with three vaguely defined frontiers; she was seemingly at the mercy of the two powerful Occidental countries who held her borders in a vise-like grip.

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## IV · HISTORY

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### II. THE ERA OF TRANSITION

#### *The Renewal of European Contacts*

The most important aspect of Siam's history in the nineteenth century is that of her relations with the European powers resulting from the expansion of her export trade. During the reign of Phya Tak, the Portuguese were the only Occidentals in the country; and except for those of Portuguese descent, not a single Siamese could speak any European language. Such French missionaries as were allowed to return after their expulsion from the country in 1779 had to learn Siamese.

With the destruction of Ayuthia most of the European culture that had seeped into Siam from the sixteenth century onwards was lost. The few survivals that remained included the use of firearms, cannon-casting, and the building of defenses, all of which were Portuguese in inspiration, and other minor contributions such as the medicinal remedies that the French doctors had given to Phra Narai—and a recipe for sponge cake. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Siam's relations with Europe were in abeyance, and her trade and fitful diplomatic relations were principally with China. Characteristically, the Chinese regarded Siam's envoys as bearers of tribute from a dependent state, whereas the Siamese looked upon their triennial embassies as good trading ventures, since the ships bearing such missions were required to pay no duties upon entering the Celestial Empire.

As in the seventeenth century, it was Siam's perennially bellicose relations with her neighbors that forced her to turn again to Europe. In 1818 the Governor of Macao obtained the right for Portuguese to trade firearms in Siam against native products and to establish a consulate in Bangkok. Little came of this privilege, however; and the Siamese were able to use Portuguese inactivity as an excuse for granting no further privileges to European envoys.

When Crawford tried to negotiate a commercial treaty with Rama II, he found that British trade would be welcomed only if accompanied by British firearms. But at this time the Burmese position was so uncertain that the only terms on which this exchange could be based, namely, that such arms should not be used against the Burmese, were unacceptable to the Siamese Court. However, when the first war broke out between the British and the Burmese, soon after the accession of Nang Klao, the Siamese, as Burma's hereditary enemies, were naturally invited to participate; and two years later Great Britain succeeded in establishing treaty relations with Siam, which temporarily facilitated trade and brought one resident British merchant, Robert Hunter, to Bangkok.

*Kings and Courts of the Chakkri Dynasty in the Nineteenth Century*

The amusing but unreliable English traveler, Frederick Neale, has left a most unflattering picture of Nang Klao, with whom he had an audience towards the end of that king's reign. After being carried up the palace steps, which were too filthy to walk up, he passed through an assemblage of prostrate courtiers to the front of the hall, where he waited before a golden curtain. After some time the curtain was drawn back, to the sound of guitar music, to reveal a half-naked man so fat that he could hardly muster enough breath for an attenuated conversation. Nang Klao spoke of a boundary dispute in which he was then engaged with the Burmese and showed his visitor a naive map, which the Prime Minister had made to indicate the relative size of the two countries. Neale was unable to restrain his laughter, which the king fortunately mistook for startled admiration. But in the midst of what he was saying, the king suddenly remembered that he was hungry; the curtain was abruptly rung down, and the interview terminated.

My opinion was and is now that any common coolie picked out of the streets of Madras would have made just as respectable a figure as His Majesty, and perhaps have had manners more polite.<sup>1</sup>

Robert Hunter, the first and for long the only English resident in Bangkok, also had an interview with Nang Klao in 1838. When the king asked him how he was getting on, he replied that he had



made a great deal of money at first but very little in recent times. The interpreter, however, said something quite different; and when Hunter reproached him, he declared that he could certainly not tell the king anything so unpleasant as that his interlocutor had actually lost money.

Nang Klao's reign was afflicted by revolts, of which there were no less than eleven in twenty-eight years. In 1824 the Chinese at Chantaburi rebelled, and this was followed by Chinese uprisings at Nakon Chaisri in 1842 and 1847, at Langsuen in 1845, and at Chengsao in 1848. The Laos were led to revolt in 1826 by the Prince of Vientiane; nine years later they again rebelled at Luang Prabang, and eleven years after that at Chiengrung. The Khmers and Yuans organized a serious revolt in 1833, which had far-reaching political effects on both countries. The Malays of Saiburi rebelled in 1830, and eight years later there followed a special revolt of Malay pirates.

In addition to this chronic internal unrest, Nang Klao was beset by external problems. When the English took Lower Burma in 1824, an old prophecy was recalled that a foreign king would conquer Siam. This naturally added to Nang Klao's uneasiness about the foreigners within his gates. Commercial treaties were made reluctantly with the British in 1822 and 1826, and with the United States in 1833, more or less to stave off the threatening Occidental powers. In 1828 the first American missionaries came and brought with them the printing press and vaccination for small-pox. But in 1850, when the United States sent Ballestier to make a new treaty with Siam, his efforts, like those of the English raja of Sarawak, Sir James Brooke, proved fruitless.

The failure of most of these missions was partially due to lack of mutual understanding, and particularly to the lack of a common medium of communication. The Siamese were antagonized by the lack of respect shown by the English for Siamese customs, and the English were annoyed by the fact that the gifts they brought were interpreted as tribute from the King of England. Thus Crawford made the error of employing an escaped slave as his interpreter; and Brooke's failure to bring any letters from his king (his only credentials were from the Governor-General of India and were, moreover, dated two years previously) militated against his success

quite as much as his insistence on his title and his tactless treatment of all Asiatics as inferiors. Furthermore, the Siamese were accustomed to hold any document sent by the king in high reverence, giving to it the honors that would be accorded to the king's person. But the Americans failed to appreciate this, particularly the missionary Smith, who acted as Ballestier's interpreter. He carried the box containing the king's documents in one hand and his umbrella in the other and was thus ushered into the presence of the Siamese officials, who resented this lack of ceremony. As a result, the British and American envoys were not even allowed to see the king; and several Siamese employees of the mission were arrested simply because of their connection with the missionaries.

The existence of factions at the court, which were evident as early as 1822 at the court of Rama II, was another obstacle to successful negotiations. The party in power was headed by the Minister of Finance, who opposed any measure that might threaten his position; although he was eager to amass wealth by cultivating foreign trade, he was at a loss as to how to go about it. The other, "more respectable," party<sup>2</sup> was led by three rival ministers who did not like commerce and were opposed to any change on traditional grounds. The commercial aspect of Crawford's mission ran counter to vested interests at the Siamese court and threatened the position of the long-established Chinese merchants. The court was further divided along lines of internal politics between the followers of the future Rama III and those of Rama IV. The Phraklang with whom Crawford dealt adhered to one faction, with the result that Crawford neglected and alienated the rival party.

Negotiations were repeatedly interrupted for the most trivial reasons. The Siamese were adept in their tactics of wearing down foreign nervous systems by constant procrastinations and delays. One day the Phraklang's father-in-law broke a favorite mirror, which so distressed the minister that he could not attend to the affairs of state for a whole day. When the king could not find two of the glass lamps valued at about four pounds sterling that were listed among the gifts brought by Crawford, he flew into a passion and threatened a general bastinado for the whole court. Bangkok was in a state of agitation for two days until they were found. Every day, according to Crawford, brought some new oc-

currence that showed the jealousy, suspicion, and arbitrary injustice of the Siamese Government.

When the Western traders began coming again to Siam, their ships were seen to be so superior to the Chinese junks that a young Siamese nobleman, Luang Siddhi, later Regent for Chulalongkorn, became interested in shipbuilding. At Chantabun, where timber was cheap and accessible, he set up a shipyard under the supervision of foreign shipwrights. When he presented the first result of his labors to the king in 1835, the latter was so taken with it that he ordered all Siamese ships henceforth to be built according to the European model.

The Opium War, which followed the Burmese successes of the British, was the turning point in Siam's relations with the West. Most Siamese accepted the Chinese interpretation that the treaty they had made with the English had been granted solely to avoid annoyance, and only a handful of men in the country recognized its real significance. These were Luang Siddhi, the shipbuilder, Prince Krom Luang Vongsa, who had studied medicine with the missionaries, Nai Mode Amatyakul, who was studying chemistry and machinery, and finally the future king, Mongkut himself.

Mongkut's more authentic claims to the throne had been forcefully brushed aside by his brother, Nang Klao, with the result that in 1824 he entered a monastery—the usual procedure for a defeated royal candidate. He was twenty years of age when he became a priest, and he remained in a monastery for twenty-seven years. In his life at court Mongkut had been surrounded by the strictest etiquette; but in the monastery he was brought into contact with an eminently democratic institution, in which all were considered solely on the basis of their personal merit.

Inevitably the contrast made a profound impression on this remarkable prince. His life in the monastery taught him his need for a realistic education, and he studied English with an American missionary and Latin with Bishop Pallegoix; he also became an accomplished scholar in Pali and Sanskrit. He came to favor the principle of establishing direct contacts between king and people and of breaking down the barriers that had formerly made a sovereign inaccessible to his subjects. The pilgrimages that were part of his priestly life brought him into contact with the people in differ-

ent parts of his future realm. His study of the tenets of Buddhism made him try to restore the purity of the Cinghalese doctrines, which had become adulterated during the post-Ayuthian period.

Owing to the total separation of Church and State, Mongkut's position was free of all political restraint. His was the role of Compleat Observer, and he had ample time to study Siam's position and needs in the world. If great China had failed to maintain her isolation, he realized that Siam, simply by a policy of continued passivity, could not hope to shape an independent policy for long. Burney's treaty had been allowed to lie fallow, with the result that the privileged position of the Chinese in the country had been strengthened; and as a result of the vexatious increase of the royal monopolies, negotiations with the foreign powers had come to a standstill. Sir James Brooke's attempt in 1850 to revise the Burney Treaty came at an inopportune moment, and the raja in his dealings was far from tactful.

The next year Mongkut came to the throne, and the great expectations that his advent had aroused in the foreign community were shortly to be realized. Under his aegis Siam passed from mediaeval to modern times. The transition was accomplished in a few years and was brought about not through external pressure but by an enlightened despot who had to re-educate the resisting ruling classes as well as the humbler and unresisting people to changes that played havoc with tradition and privilege. The change could not be effected completely or all at once, and many reforms were more apparent than real. The contrast between the Oriental and Occidental ideas that Mongkut introduced was well exemplified in the king's extraordinarily complex character.

The most interesting portrait of Siam's first modern king was drawn by Mrs. Leonowens, the very conventional and Christian English governess whom he imported for his children's European education. The king specified that her activities should consist in helping him with his correspondence and dispensing a knowledge of the English language, science, and literature, but that she must not attempt "a conversion to Christianity of our beloved children, whom the English call inhabitants of a benighted land."<sup>3</sup>

Mongkut's promises proved more sweeping than practical.

Upon her arrival Mrs. Leonowens was greeted by a half-naked Siamese, who could throw no light on where she was to live. "His Majesty cannot remember everything. You can go where you like," <sup>4</sup> he said helpfully, and left her forthwith. The Prime Minister was equally astonished by her request.

When she was presented in royal audience, the king, perceiving her in the distance, advanced abruptly; petulantly screaming "Who? who? who?"; but in time he managed to shake hands with her. He then proceeded to cogitate in his peculiar manner, marching up and down as if under drill. Suddenly he halted and pointed right at her demanding, "How old shall you be?" This dignified lady had previously told the Prime Minister to mind his own business when he had been seized by the same curiosity, but to the king she replied, "150 years old." The king was surprised and embarrassed, and even the interpreter had to step behind a convenient pillar to laugh. The English governess was then presented to Mongkut's wife and promised faithfully to educate his sixty-seven children. But she refused to live in the palace, which she dramatically described as "the bosom of a most corrupt society, enslaved to a capricious and often cruel will." When she reminded Mongkut that he had promised her a residence adjacent to the royal palace, he turned purple with passion and screamed, "You are our servant and you shall obey." Though he later repented and gave her a house, it was a hovel consisting of two squalid rooms next to the fish market.

Although an astrologer selected the propitious day for first lessons, Mrs. Leonowens accomplished little. At first all the harem were quite eager to learn English and to question her intimately. She grew quite fond of her pupils and used to intercede for them with the king, who was often gratuitously cruel towards them. Her influence was so greatly resented, however, that her servants were beaten and she herself was hit on the head by a stone because of a grudge held against her by the Prime Minister's brother. But in spite of such troubles she liked the Siamese and thought Mongkut a remarkable monarch although he increased her labors beyond the contract terms, refused her the salary he had promised, and spasmodically heaped insults and curses on her. Sometimes also moral principles interfered with her work, as when the king tried to intimidate her into writing two false letters to Bowring.

Theoretically the king's powers were absolute, but he followed an almost slavish routine of existence. He rose at five, ate a slight repast, and then gave food to the ambulatory priests. This was followed by a visit to his private temple and a nap—all accompanied by relays of palace ladies. The rest of the morning was spent in study. After lunching with great ceremony, he bathed, chatted with his wives and children, and then went to the Audience Hall to attend to official business. Twice a week at sunset he heard appeals from his subjects. At nine o'clock he indicated the ladies chosen for the evening.

The king enjoyed publicizing government business and his views thereon. The Official Gazette was started during his reign as part of his policy of breaking down the isolation of the Siamese kings. He liked straightforward speech and did not feel himself more squeamish than other humans. He disliked using Pali translations; and when he heard Siamese using them, he often said that he hoped they would grow bald.

The king's character revealed an extraordinary contrast between high Buddhist principles and a greed for power and possessions. He was a loving father to his children but violent and jealous in his domestic relations and friendships. His capability and nobility of mind did not help him to control his temper. He had a real love of learning but was most inconsiderate and pedantic in its use. He frequently aroused the English consul out of his sleep and summoned him to the palace ten miles away to help him find a word he could not locate in his dictionary or to advise him as to whether "murky" or "gloomy" was the more elegant usage. He imported an English governess to teach his children, but he overworked and underpaid her; he treated her like a servant and then consulted her about affairs of state. Townsend Harris called him "the most learned fool in Buddhodom."

His capacity for detail was remarkable. He could recite the names of every American officer who had come on the ship with Roberts in 1833, and he labeled the cases of presents for the American President with his own hand. But Harris, who had pointlessly been kept waiting for two hours by the king, found him pedantic beyond belief on a very scanty fund of knowledge. He resembled Solomon, according to Harris, only in the number of his wives and concubines; and his conversation

was the most frivolous I have ever listened to and satisfied me that he was as weak-minded as he was pedantic. He enumerated all the languages he could speak, the various sciences he had a smattering of, and the various individuals he corresponded with.<sup>5</sup>

Mongkut's policy was decidedly pro-English. Sir John Bowring, four years after his accession, met with a cordiality that contrasted profoundly with the suspicion that had been accorded to his predecessors. Siam was opened up to foreign commerce, and foreign residents were placed under a consular régime. Siamese ambassadors were sent to Europe for the first time since the seventeenth century.

In 1868 the frontier between Siam and Tenasserim was established by treaty, and the following year another agreement buried the Kedah hatchet with England. On the French side, this was the period of the Lagrée exploration of the Mekong, the establishment of the French protectorate over Cambodia, and encroachments into Laos from the Cochin-Chinese base. Despite his friendship for Bishop Pallegoix and various French savants, Mongkut entertained lively fears of the French, and especially of their missionaries. His prejudice and fear of intrigue reached the point where he refused French applicants for admission to his harem. Mrs. Leonowens was often assigned the duty of writing letters in French because he found his French correspondents fond of using "gloomily deceiving terms and murky sentences"—perhaps a conscious offense to Gallic clarity.

Mongkut was the first king to employ Westerners, whom he chose by preference from small unambitious countries. He reorganized the army and navy; made use of the mission printing press; substituted flat for round coinage and founded the mint; constructed the New Road, Bangkok's main street; and built various buildings in the most unfortunate European style of architecture. One of his pet projects was the teaching of foreign languages, but he found his subjects too innately conservative and parents reluctant to expose their children to the possible proselytism of missionary teaching. Even in the palace the Crown Prince, later Chulalongkorn, was the only one of the king's numerous progeny to learn English in his father's lifetime. It was Mongkut who initiated

the Westernization of his country, but it was left to his successors to force it deep into the national consciousness until it altered the whole Siamese tradition and viewpoint.

*Chulalongkorn and his Court*

The sons of Siamese kings were brought up in the palace until they reached the age of twelve or thirteen, when they were given separate establishments under tutorial supervision. Chulalongkorn's early childhood was no exception to this tradition; but when he was sent to his own palace, Mongkut made a radical innovation. At a public ceremony he gave absolute authority over the young prince to an English tutor, Robert Morant. Unfortunately, however, the regular student life inaugurated by Morant lasted only a year and a half as Chulalongkorn succeeded to the throne while still a minor.

Chulalongkorn was only sixteen when his father died. He was too old to go to school and yet too young to reign. Lethargic physically, the young king was mentally alert; he had a strong will, dignity, and charm. His decision to travel abroad was the first revolutionary step in a reforming career. In 1871 he visited Singapore, Java, and later India; and what he saw in those countries had a great influence on his future policy.

On his return he established two schools in the palace, which he forced the children of the aristocracy to attend. The outstanding product of this forced culture was Prince Devawongse, the first Siamese Foreign Minister to speak European languages. At his coronation in 1873 the young king, in a moving ceremony, proclaimed the abolition of prostration in the royal presence. He also progressively abolished slavery. Like his father, Chulalongkorn abandoned royal inaccessibility and was often seen driving through the streets of his capital; he was fond of indulging in informal chats and even of playing practical jokes. The residue of Oriental despotism remained longer in his private than in his public life. His thirty-two wives and one hundred concubines succeeded in producing 236 offspring.

After 1892 the king's health, which had always been poor, grew steadily worse. Unkind critics attributed its decline to his twenty-five years of harem life, his addiction to drugs, and the removal of



the restraining hand of his European physician. At the time of the French crisis of 1893, the king was in a state of virtual collapse. He had retired to his sea palace just at a time when the court's foolhardy policy almost lost the country its independence. An appreciation of the royal Siamese tradition, whereby the kings live in sacred isolation in a city of women and children, seeing almost no one but subservient officials, is vital to an understanding of their policy and lack of contact with both their people and the world. It was in this atmosphere that Chulalongkorn elected to spend much of his life, especially his later years; and it permitted jealousy to become rampant in the court and to influence the king's own attitude towards friends and relatives alike.

Mongkut's policy of modernizing the country and developing relations with foreign powers was carried on by Chulalongkorn in spite of the inevitable opposition of the reactionary faction both at court and in the provinces. The extraordinary absolutism in which tradition had confirmed the kings of Siam was of the greatest aid in effecting the metamorphosis of a passive country against the wishes of the majority of nobles and princes. Chulalongkorn was thus able to effect a general reorganization in the direction of centralization and official responsibility and control. Formerly each department had been in the hands of a prince or nobleman who was responsible solely to the king and who wangled from him every year what money he could get for his department. What he did with this money was only his and—spasmodically—the king's concern since he had no troublesome accounts to keep.

In 1891 Chulalongkorn formed a Cabinet of twelve Ministers, nominated by him and removable at will. These Ministers henceforth were to budget their expenses, submit estimates to the king for his approval, and make a monthly report of their expenditures to the Treasury before receiving the following month's income. This was theoretically a good move, but it worked very creakily; certain unessential details were insisted upon, but major expenditures slipped by unnoticed. This threw the whole Treasury—which was also the Exchequer and Audit Department—into paralysis for weeks. Salaries were always in arrears, and the corruption inherent in the system ran on unchecked. Each Cabinet Minister was a little king with absolute authority over his department, which

was staffed invariably with his friends and dependents. This continuation of the old client-patron relationship meant that, when the head of a department was changed, the whole staff rotated with him regardless of their qualifications. It was not infrequent that a customs clerk found himself quite suddenly an inspector of schools.

In theory the Cabinet meetings were secret, with the king or crown prince in attendance. These sessions often started at eight and lasted all night for five nights of the week. The result was that the Ministers slept all day and turned up at their offices, if at all, around sunset. Business was indefinitely held up by additional chess-playing and prolonged naps, since the Minister's consent was essential for every detail of departmental affairs. As part of the program of Westernization, European office hours were kept by sleepy clerks; but no real business could be attended to, as Europeans found out to their intense annoyance, in the prolonged absence of the Ministers. Religious functions and innumerable court ceremonies took up valuable time and energy that were badly needed for the secular affairs of state.

Sir Henry Norman has graphically described a visit to the Foreign Office at this period.<sup>6</sup> Guards sat about on rickety chairs or oil tins at the entrances to the palace, insolently demanding on what business people came. In the courtyards, sleeping functionaries lay about in various degrees of undress; snoring attendants cluttered up the hallways, which were in total darkness because no one had thought of refilling the gigantic chandeliers. The squalor and disorder of the passages were increased by the prevalence of betel-nut chewing and cigarette smoking, and there was no regular performance of any routine duty. This fine royal palace had not a single drain, only a trench to carry off the rain. Prince Devawongse's office was the brilliant exception to those of the generally slovenly, indolent, and light-hearted Siamese Ministers.

Although Chulalongkorn had remarkable vision, he was not free from personal extravagance of a non-productive type in the best traditions of Oriental despotism. The princes paid nothing in taxes, and the king gave them houses and presents according to their station. Each prince whose mother was of royal blood cost this poor country £100,000. The king's luxurious yacht boasted many ladies' bedrooms, but places for engineers and crew were

singularly lacking; the situation was analogous to that in the navy, which had cannon without projectiles or gunners. A royal cremation in 1901 drained the Treasury of a thirtieth of its total revenues. The king lavished money on festivals and fireworks. A government department was often requisitioned for a procession, and a Minister might ingratiate himself with his sovereign by donating public property as a personal gift; thus the Minister of Education removed the paving stones from the chief school in Bangkok to present them to the king for his palace.<sup>7</sup> However, it was too soon for the king to make a clearcut distinction between his own and state property; and Chulalongkorn's statesmanship was remarkable for not being more capricious and personal than it was. Bribery and corruption continued to flourish, but they were less in evidence than formerly because opportunities were fewer.

Jealousy was probably the most disruptive factor in the Siamese court. Admiration for European achievement and the growing realization that Europe alone could teach Siam how to retain the independence so cherished by the Siamese were offset by resentment of European guidance. The suggestions of imported advisers were followed temporarily, if at all. No accredited foreigner was ever refused anything outright, but his policy was nullified by inaction, or discreetly shelved. The court was content with a superficial Europeanization that would deceive the world into thinking that Siam was a modern state.

Siamese jealousy was not by any means wholly directed towards Europeans; it showed itself most virulently among the Siamese themselves. The Cabinet was not only lethargic and unrealistic; it was also divided against itself. The two most capable princes among the Ministers, Damrong and Devawongse, were striving to outdo each other in power and glory. The Cabinet was made up of the king's innumerable half-brothers, with a smattering of lesser nobles of little influence. The Siamese saying "to hate like a brother" revealed a situation inseparable from polygamous society and one not solely confined to royal jealousies.

Within the Cabinet, alliances were formed for the sole purpose of balancing the power of one group against another of rival influence; there was never any thought of cooperation for the good of the nation. These jealousies had the opportunities of getting out of

hand at a particularly dangerous time when the French gunboats were in the Menam. The king's prolonged absence from Bangkok gave the most aggressive member of the Cabinet, Prince Svasti, the chance to canalize the wranglings of his colleagues into an attitude of arrogant defiance towards the French demands. An arrangement with France only became possible after the departure of Prince Svasti, when negotiations were entrusted to Prince Devawongse. The king, still sick in mind and body, had a hard time to reassert control over his Cabinet when he returned after the crisis was over. He finally solved the problem by allowing the Cabinet meetings to lapse. Thus the first attempt at ministerial government had proved a failure.

Most foreign observers at this time were anything but sympathetic with Siam's struggles towards nationhood. This was the period of English pressure from the south and of French encroachments from the east, and representatives of both nations naturally had every interest in emphasizing the flaws that made Siam unworthy to govern her own domains. Sir Henry Norman, on information he gleaned on a visit to Siam and from conversations with a disgruntled foreign adviser who had been ousted from the court, drew the most lugubrious of all pictures of Siam at this period. Forcigners, he claimed, who gaped with admiration at Siam's apparent progress in the Western sense, had been deceived by the false façade and knew nothing of what went on in that nerve centre of Oriental iniquity, the palace. The crisis of 1893 had shown up the true state of affairs—the apathy of the king, who was sulking in his tent like any thwarted Oriental despot, and the levity and fatuous self-confidence of the court, which had no appreciation of the real situation. He felt that the king, under the guise of centralizing a modern state, had drained wealth and power from the feudality to use it for his own ends and for the advancement of his immediate family circle. It was currently said that it was unnatural for Siam to be the only country in that part of Asia to escape European control, and that the sooner she succumbed to the inevitable the better off she would be.

The agreement of 1896 between France and Britain, which guaranteed the neutrality of the Menam basin, provided no more than a short breathing spell for Siam in her relations with the

foreign powers. England at this time was preoccupied with the competitive German bid for influence in Siam; but the German political advance was not so successful as her commercial progress, and her attempt to get a foothold in one of the Gulf islands aroused Chulalongkorn's suspicions. Moreover, the foreign loans of 1905 and 1907 were reassuring to England as they placed Siam within the financial orbit of London. Yet the Japanese victory of 1905, which had enormous repercussions all over the Far East, signaled the rise of another more threatening factor in the Asiatic balance of power. Henceforth Japan was to replace Germany as Britain's chief rival in the Far East, particularly after Germany's defeat in the first world war. Japan's triumph also had a far-reaching psychological effect on Siam and gave rise to an intensified nationalism and the bolder tone towards the Western nations that has subsequently characterized Siam's history. Europe, after all, was not invincible; and by following Japan's example Siam might retain her independence. It was not wholly coincidental that the Siamo-Japanese treaty of 1898 was the opening wedge driven into those extraterritorial rights that Siam was to spend the next quarter-century in abrogating.

The keen competition among Western nations for Siam's trade and for adviserships in the administration contributed to the country's rapid development, which was accelerated after boundary questions were resolved in the rich and heretofore untouched peninsula. Greater attentions were shown to Siam by the powers: in 1909 there was an Austro-Hungarian celebration, the arrival of German warships, and the visit of the French commander of the Indo-Chinese forces—just preceding one by an English admiral. A Chinese delegation was followed by the Prince Regent of Brunswick, and more Japanese and French cruisers. France and Britain still held the reins, and the relative degree of their control seemed at that time to depend on how much Siam had to borrow from each of them to effect internal improvements. Although Siam's continued independence came to be accepted more and more, even as late as the world war rumors periodically cropped up that there was a secret agreement between these two powers to partition Siam as part of the victors' spoils. From the larger viewpoint of foreign relations, not to mention the current pressure

exercised by her immediate neighbors, Siam's hope of bargaining for new treaty concessions made her minuscule participation in the world war a profitable policy.

*Chulalongkorn's Centralization of Siam in 1892*

The loss of Siam's eastern provinces to France and the encroachment of Great Britain in the peninsula brought an appreciation of the weaknesses engendered by administrative decentralization. Traditional *laissez-faire* was pulled up short when the central government found itself involved in the agreements made with foreign companies by irresponsible local officials in the tin and teak areas. Communications throughout the country were so poor, and Western nations so aggressive, that Siam had already incurred much needless loss of her resources.

In the late nineteenth century many travelers noted that the inefficiency and corruption of the provincial officials were proportioned to their inaccessibility to Bangkok's control. The provincial towns were filled with unsatisfied litigants, unsettled claims, and untried prisoners.<sup>8</sup> The police in the peninsula were so outnumbered that they did not dream of keeping order; they were overworked, underpaid, and practically unarmed. The sums expended by the central government on the provinces were almost exactly equal to those of their gendarmes' salaries. From Bangkok's viewpoint, the provincial governors' only business was to remit revenues to the capital, with the result that local misgovernment and oppression riddled the whole system. Where able administrators existed, they were hampered by the lack of efficient assistants because the money was lacking with which to employ them.

Among the money-making devices open to dishonest officials was the failure to give receipts for land taxes, as a result of which such taxes could be forcibly collected an indefinite number of times. Officials could refuse to give titles for new land to people who failed to pay the necessary bribes; they could exact tolls on ships, get rich men into court on trumped-up charges, and confiscate their property. Yet no Siamese questioned such official methods; they regarded them as the natural way for functionaries to make a living and would have done the same thing in their place. The government's attitude was that, so long as the provincial governors

sent in money, they might misrule as they pleased. Observers like Smyth thought that the only solution lay in a more enlightened local spending policy by the central government and the institution of an adequately salaried civil service.<sup>9</sup>

One of the results of Chulalongkorn's tour of the peninsula was the realization that he must strengthen his authority there. Accordingly, he appointed Royal Commissioners for the provinces, whose powers, particularly in regard to financial control, went over the heads of local officials. Henceforth a proportion of the revenues were to be allotted for local requirements, and only the residue sent to Bangkok. The military powers of these commissioners, however, proved dangerous in the subsequent border incidents along the eastern frontier; for wherever they could, they entered into armed combat with wandering French patrols and then left Bangkok to disown responsibility for such acts of aggression.

This new provincial hierarchy was now composed mainly of members of the royal family and no longer of local hereditary chieftains. Probably this centralization that finally broke the feudality was the most effective and far-reaching of any of Chulalongkorn's schemes of modernization. Henceforth local officials were to be exclusively appointed by the central government and rotated in such a way as to develop a national rather than a regional viewpoint. The feudal princes were thus deprived of their corvée and fiscal privileges; but the people were distrustful and not inaccurately expected that the princes would attempt to collect again once the Royal Commissioners' backs were turned. Although these reforms were not wholly effective, the national revenues showed a marked increase. Princes became salaried officials employed by the government rather than independent and hereditary rulers paying occasional tribute to a nominal overlord. However, there was a lack of trained men of integrity; and the new civil servants were sometimes as bad as those they replaced. But on the whole, their institution marked a distinct advance for the country.

Before 1892 the provinces were under three different Ministries of often varying policies—the Ministries of the Interior, of War, and of Foreign Affairs; but in practice they were independently administered. Under the new system, all the provinces were placed

under salaried appointees responsible to the Minister of the Interior, at that time the capable Prince Damrong. The whole country was divided first into eighteen and later into fourteen Circles, or *monthon*s, each under a lord-lieutenant. The *monthon* was divided into *changvads*, or provinces, each with a governor at its head, appointed for an indefinite period as the liaison officer between the central and local administrations. Each *changvad* was subdivided into *amphurs*, or districts, which were broken up again into *tambols* or communes. The *tambols*, comprising about 2,000 persons, are headed by a *kamnan*, and are divided into villages of from ten to twelve families, who elect their own chieftain; and these village chiefs in turn elect their *kamnan*. Thus the head of the *amphur* is the last appointive official, and the lowest administrative unit is self-governing with franchise for adults of both sexes. Bangkok was originally assigned to the Minister of Local Government but was later handed over to the Minister of the Interior to make its administration consistent with that of the rest of the country. Corollary reforms consisted of the creation of a gendarmerie and a Public Prosecution Department under the central government, which was henceforth responsible for law and order everywhere.

Chulalongkorn was the first Siamese king to admit that his duty was to rule not for himself but in the interests of his people, thus reuniting the Khmer ideals of absolute kingship with the old Thai tradition of the sovereign as father of his country. On his accession he found Siam in most ways still a primitive Oriental country, with no clear code of laws, almost no means of communication, no real financial system, and no public education. He abolished slavery, reformed the financial system, initiated public works, established a system of public education, and reorganized the law courts—all without recourse to force. He sent hundreds of young Siamese abroad to learn from the West how to help Siam govern herself. In the meantime, he secured foreign advice without foreign entanglements; and he created a modern state without a big public debt or imposing heavy taxes. Alone of all the countries of southeastern Asia, Siam struggled to modernize herself and to overcome her particular vices; and for all of this king Chulalongkorn deserves great credit.

However, in the process of modernizing the country, the Chak-



kri dynasty took on an increasingly autocratic character. In spite of the Khmer theories of kingship, the increasing business of state in an expanding country had necessitated, in practice, a certain division of the king's power. But the effect of Chulalongkorn's curbing of the power of the feudal potentates was to restore to the monarchy the absolute power that had formerly existed only in theory. He tolerated no control or criticism and shared his power with no one. He had set himself an impossible task—the creation of a modern state under an absolute monarchy.

Chulalongkorn's new civil servants should have been given more power, but the advisory body that he created in 1874 had no real independence. It was composed of fifty appointed members, whose inexperience and awe of the king prevented fruitful discussion. The Cabinet of twelve members also proved itself inadequate, and even dangerous, in 1893, despite its two fine councillors, Damrong and Devawongse.

The failure of these two councils was taken to indicate the futility of sharing the royal power. Daily audiences with his family and the princes were thereafter considered sufficient to keep the king in touch with such public opinion as then existed. Chulalongkorn's personal popularity and great achievements permitted him to finish his reign in tranquility, and the inconsistencies in his work were not to become apparent until the accession of Rama IV. He succeeded in laying the foundations of a state that offered no excuse, in the form of internal disorder, that would justify foreign intervention. He had learned the lesson of 1893—that he could not stop Europe if force were used. But by playing off two equal adversaries, he offered neither one of them an opening. Like his father, he actively renounced the policy of isolation as dangerous. A truly great man, he was willing to relinquish territory, give up royal prerogatives, and press reforms on an apathetic people, in spite of the veiled reluctance of his so-called collaborators.

### *Vajiravudh*

Four of the five Chakkri kings of the nineteenth century were the children of marriages between half-brothers and half-sisters, and one of the results of this inbreeding was the paucity of children born to the Siamese royal family in the twentieth century. A

daughter was born to Vajiravudh's queen only on the day of his death; and Prajadhipok was childless, as were many of the other princes. As succession to the throne was barred to women, the oldest son of the highest ranking queen was chosen, or the king's own brother if direct heirs were lacking. This unwritten law was formally confirmed in 1924.

Chulalongkorn carried on his father's traditions bravely. He had 134 sons, 236 daughters, and 600 widows of varying ranks. He had married three royal sisters, and at once a race began between them as to which one should have the first son. The middle sister seemed to have won, since her two rivals had girls. But this son died, and his brother was born very much later. The oldest sister was drowned with her child, with the result that the youngest sister and her offspring unexpectedly carried off the honors. Altogether she produced five sons, of whom Vajiravudh was the oldest and Prajadhipok the youngest. The intervening brothers either died or contracted unsuitable marriages.

Vajiravudh never expected to come to the throne; and when he did so in 1910, his name was found to be so unpronounceable to Europeans that he became known as Rama VI. He had been educated abroad, following his natural artistic and literary bent. He was a very charming man, talented and democratic, but not in the least politically minded. When he returned to Siam to become king, he had no following there; and he found his uncle, Prince Nagor Svarga, not only head of the army but also of the most powerful faction at court. To counteract his influence and that of the other royal princes, Vajiravudh created a corps known as the Wild Tigers and appointed favorites of his own choosing to different government posts. His relatives were angered by his neglect of them, by his preoccupation with the drama, and by his extravagance, which ultimately produced a deficit in the Treasury.

Discontent showed itself actively two years after his accession, when a plot to assassinate him was uncovered. There seems also to have been a vague plan to establish a republic or a constitutional monarchy. Censorship was so rigorously imposed in the case of this incident that even now the details are not clear. It is known only that the Bangkok troops were ready to mutiny and to march on the palace. Vajiravudh's creation of the Wild Tiger corps had

discontented the army and navy, and sixty officers were arrested as ringleaders. The current unrest in the Orient arising from the Chinese Revolution and the increasing number of Chinese immigrants in Siam were certainly contributing causes. The plot was nipped in the bud, thanks to the activity of the Prince of Pitsanuloke, but not before the movement had spread to the provinces, where many responsible men were implicated.

Far from taking this incident as a warning, the king became even more absolute than before. It had caused no apparent disorder and surprisingly little general stir; and the king's continued leniency and tendency to encourage free discussion seemed to have increased his popularity. Nevertheless, the Siamese had not the same confidence in their young and impulsive king that they had had in his father. Moreover, a succession of bad harvests at this time added the factor of economic discontent to the already unsettling contact with currents of world thought and produced a series of abortive revolts throughout the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

Almost all the rest of Vajiravudh's fifteen-year reign was peaceful, though a second conspiracy occurred in 1917. Significantly the plot again originated among the military officers and clearly foreshadowed the role they were to play in the *coup d'état* of 1932. This time the war added another element to the undercurrent of discontent in the army. The king and his court were very pro-Ally, whereas most of the army officers, who had been trained in Germany, sympathized accordingly.

During the last years of his reign the king became increasingly absorbed in his own as opposed to public interests. He wrote a primer on hygiene, essays on finance and education, and a number of plays, in which he acted himself. He enjoyed composing moral lectures to his people, which he published under the pseudonym of Asvabahu, and devoted himself to reviving old customs and ceremonials. At his garden parties white elephants stood about on the lawns, and the king appeared crowned by the seven-tiered umbrella. State and even formal functions became increasingly elaborate and expensive. His tour of the peninsula in 1917 was conducted with great pomp and splendor, and his retinue of over five hundred had a special train to carry their uniforms. Expensive pavilions, which were probably never used again, were erected

everywhere the king went. It was reported that this tour cost Tcs. 500,000, not counting the new buildings or the gifts made to the king. When the armistice was proclaimed, a remarkable peace pageant was organized, in which the royal family appeared garbed in cloth of gold. As a result of this extravagance the king became increasingly less popular and more isolated from his people.

From the king's point of view, however, all these gestures not only gratified his sense of the dramatic but were part of his conscious fostering of patriotism and pride in race. The major means of inculcation used were the Boy Scout movement and the Wild Tigers. Even Buddhism was compelled to play its part. Chulalongkorn's religious attitude had been one of sceptical tolerance, akin to that of Mongkut; but Vajiravudh made an issue of Buddhism as Siam's national religion. To be Buddhist became synonymous with being a good Siamese. The traditional Siamese love of independence, which was fostered by the Japanese victory of 1905 and the Chinese Revolution of 1912, produced a nascent patriotism that under Rama VI flowered into aggressive nationalism.

From the standpoint of foreign policy Vajiravudh's reign was a great success. His coronation in December 1911 brought together a more representative gathering of European royalty than had ever before met in Asia. It was almost inevitable that Siam should become involved in the world war. Britain and France were exerting continual pressure on her on account of her food supplies and because she was a centre from which German intrigue was radiating into the adjacent colonies. Moreover, from Siam's point of view, entry into the war would enable her to confiscate German interests in the country and to obtain advantageous treaty concessions. Siam's financial position at the time was such that she was in danger of becoming seriously indebted to England and France, and rumors were still rife that these countries, no longer rivals but allies, had agreed to assume a joint protectorate over Siam.

### *The First World War*

Between February and March 1917 three articles appeared in *Der Neue Orient* outlining the history of Siam's sufferings at the hands of England and France and pointing out with considerable truth that this was the way they had in the past coerced small

nations for whose rights they were professedly fighting. Nevertheless, in spite of strong pro-German sentiments on the part of the military, Siam that same year sent a note to Germany stating that she disapproved of submarine warfare. To this the Imperial Government replied that Siam had in that case only to keep her ships off the sea, and this response was made the cause of a declaration of war. Enemy aliens were interned and later sent to Madras, and German ships were seized and handed over to the Allies at a nominal rental. The advantage of Siam's participation to England and France was principally that they could now remove the troops they were keeping in their colonies to guard against the possible dangers resulting from German intrigues in Siam. On the positive side of the ledger there were Siam's food surplus and the Siamese expeditionary force that was sent to France in June 1918 under Phya Devahastin.

When Siam drew up her balance sheet a few months later, she found that the expense of going to war had been more than compensated by what she had gained by joining the winning side. Her participation had saved her from the danger of becoming an Anglo-French protectorate and had paved the way for a revision of her treaties. She emerged with no war debt and without having suffered a single military casualty. The cost of living had gone up, but the government had taken steps to prevent speculation from getting out of control. She was somewhat inconvenienced by shortages in certain supplies, and in particular by a rise in the cost of manufactures and in freight rates. But until the post-war economic crisis set in, her economic troubles were in great part the product of other than war conditions—first the floods of 1917 and later the crop failure of 1919–1920.

### *Internal Administration*

The record of Rama VI's reign was nothing like so fortunate from the viewpoint of internal history as it was in the sphere of foreign relations, where notable progress was made in the way of treaty revisions and the completion of Siam's codes. The king's extravagance led to new foreign loans at a high interest rate; and when he died, in 1925, the economic condition of the country was critical. Court favorites delved freely into the Privy Purse resources; ministerial authority was undermined; and many of the

institutions that Chulalongkorn had either created or strengthened were misused or allowed to fall into decay. Not that the king consciously misgoverned or was indifferent to his people; but state resources were used for private and unproductive ends, and the king was dominated by a clique whose interests ran counter to those of public welfare.

On the credit side of his activities, Rama VI's theoretical humanitarianism led him to pay for a year's vaccination campaign out of his own purse, to encourage the Boy Scout movement and physical education, to close the last of the gaming houses in 1917, and to organize a Red Cross Society, which in turn opened a leper asylum and started an anti-tuberculosis campaign. The king's donations included Tcs. 250,000 to the Pasteur Institute and Tcs. 120,000 to Rajini School as a memorial to the Queen Mother. In his reign the Medical Law was passed, and two new public health centres were opened. In 1919 the Rice Control Act fixed maximum prices to counteract the growing dearness of food, which was creating hardship for the poorer classes; and in 1921 elementary education was made compulsory for boys and girls. Irrigation projects were given new impetus, and the people's liability to corvée service was lessened.

On the fiscal side, there was a remission of taxes on fruit gardens; Privy Purse properties were made subject to the same taxation as the property of ordinary citizens; and a new capitation law did away with a tax exemption of officials.

From the point of view of economic development, the country forged ahead in spite of the fact that reforms were promised far oftener than they were realized. The long-discussed law on weights and measures was promulgated; national savings banks were established; the Board of Commercial Development was instituted; and a Financial Commission was appointed, which, however, did little beyond studying a few problems. The irrigation of the lower Menam valley progressed in a mild way; the peninsular railroad was extended considerably; and aviation made definite progress, particularly in the development of postal services to the northeastern provinces. The first part of the Civil and Commercial Code was promulgated in 1925.

Rama VI effected a certain administrative reorganization, but

less from ideological conviction than from a wish to appoint his satellites to sinecures; in some cases, offices were deliberately created for them. This gave rise to a system of corruption unparalleled in the country's history. Appointments came largely to be controlled by patronage. Palace intrigues used up most of the king's energies and were not wholly unrelated to the bad state of the kingdom's finances.

This reign brought to the fore all the difficulties and shortcomings inherent in one-man rule. Despite the growing cumbersome-ness of the administrative machinery, the sovereign's absolute power continued to grow. Nothing important or unimportant could be done without his personal approbation. Since opposing the royal will was tantamount to sending in one's resignation, no Minister dared initiate any policy without first probing the king's attitude towards it. The Cabinet met very rarely; and each Minister decided each question as it arose in his own way, consulting only the king. As a result, there was complete lack of coordination between the various government departments.

Rama VI made no effort to renew Chulalongkorn's feeble attempts to develop representative government. He liked the picturesque side of a sovereign's rôle, but he left too much of the solid work to his Ministers and was easily swayed by his favorites. The country continued in a subdued state of discontent, with an occasional outburst of criticism against certain Ministers and royal favorites. All the government did by way of reply was to close down the papers in which these adverse comments appeared. The vast majority of the people, however, attributed the bad state of affairs to the king as an individual and not to the system—excepting perhaps the very small number of Siamese educated in Europe who themselves wanted some share in the government. At this time, however, they were not organized but scattered throughout the civil service; and their vague aspirations, born of contact with European energy, were usually stifled upon their return to Siam by bureaucratic routine or the inevitable indolence engendered by a tropical climate.

Largely owing to the fact that the numbers and influence of the foreign advisers were cut down steadily during this reign, the administration of the country degenerated into a conflict between

outstanding personalities, as in the crisis of 1893. The king was increasingly reluctant to concern himself with administrative routine directly. In 1923 he made Prince Devawongse Regent of Siam with power to transact ordinary state business without royal supervision. This transfer of authority came at a very critical time, when important foreign treaties were being negotiated.

A more dramatic and forceful personality was that of Chao Phya Yomarej. To him the king entrusted a vastly augmented Ministry of the Interior, to which the Ministry of Local Government had been added. The judiciary, which was not independent of the administration, stood in crying need of reform; but the whole subject was ignored except for the promulgation of the Civil and Commercial Code. All his accumulated powers made Yomarej the most powerful personality at court. He had risen through sheer ability from an obscure post in the household of one of Chulalongkorn's brothers, and his meteoric career survived even the purge of the administration effected by Prajadhipok on his accession. He became one of the three Regents of the kingdom under the constitutional régime.

Palace intrigue naturally centred around the infinitely ramified royal family. In 1920 the king's brother, the Prince of Pitsanuloke, the Heir Apparent and Chief-of-Staff, quarreled with the king. The breach between them widened with time, their differences in opinion ranging from war policy to the question of the prince's marriage to a Russian wife. The king's own marriage was also a source of endless conjecture and disturbance; and by 1922 he had had two queens in spite of his earlier and very vocal advocacy of monogamy.

### *Prajadhipok*

Prajadhipok was a quiet and conscientious man, and his accession to the throne was backed by the royal princes because they realized that a quarrel among themselves over the succession would spell the end of their power. The crowning of the new king brought a feeling of relief and hope. His liberal sympathies were known, as were his plans for a constitution; but he was modest, inexperienced, and chronically handicapped by ill-health. One of his first acts was to dismiss his brother's favorites; but though this



step met with general approval, it was less important than it seemed. Its purpose was primarily to please the princes who were thereby avenged on those who had alienated Vajiravudh from them.

In the interests of economy Prajadhipok continued his predecessor's policy of dismissing foreign advisers; and by reducing the number of *monthons* and *changvads*, he eliminated a number of unnecessary officials. This pruning of the civil service was long overdue; but it was not without danger. Most of the men dismissed had been brought up to lives of comparative luxury and absolute security; they were trained for only one profession and could not easily find a substitute. When the Royal Pages Corps was reduced from 3,000 to 300, the body of potential malcontents was still further increased. The cutting out of so much dead wood was welcomed by the people as a whole, but the resentment of the middle-class European-trained youths contributed materially to the *coup d'état* of 1932.

Without financial retrenchment, however, the kingdom would soon have become bankrupt. Prajadhipok did not negotiate foreign loans or increase taxes, but the economies he effected helped build up important Treasury reserves. He set an example by reducing the Civil List and Royal Household expenditures by a single stroke from nine to six million ticals. Financial rehabilitation was aided by the fact that the new treaties permitted increased revenues through a higher tariff, and by the prosperous condition of world trade. Four excellent harvests in succession further restored the country's depleted finances.

On the political field Prajadhipok was equally vigorous. After breaking up the clique that had dominated Vajiravudh, he instituted a Supreme Council made up of five of the most important princes. The upshot was simply that the government of the princes succeeded that of the favorites, and so little progress resulted. This Council of Princes, which was officially an advisory body, met regularly under the king's chairmanship. The king also revived the Cabinet, which had been created and condemned by Chulalongkorn, and which had rarely been used by Vajiravudh.

The Privy Council, formed a little later, was a revival of Chulalongkorn's abortive attempt at representative government in 1874.

The Councillors were now unlimited in number and were appointed for the duration of the reign. Each of them could submit suggestions or information to the king directly, and forty of them were nominated by Prajadhipok to act as a committee to advise him on such matters as he chose to submit to them. The basic idea was that through this committee the king would have access to a wider range of public opinion, and that it would give some of the Councillors a chance to show initiative and generally to gain experience in political life. In actual practice, new legislation was first considered by the department directly interested and then discussed by the Cabinet and Supreme Council. Though not compelled to do so, the king listened gladly to the suggestions of these advisory bodies, which were regarded as the framework of a constitution. To those few who wanted parliamentary government these gestures seemed empty and futile. Freedom of speech might exist among the Councillors, but there was no report of their meetings; neither the press nor the public was admitted, and the brief and infrequent communiqués that were issued were hardly revealing.

It had long been known that Prajadhipok favored giving a constitution to his people but that the princes opposed it on the ground that the country was not yet ready for it. On his visit to America in 1931, the king in his press interviews emphasized the patriarchal nature of Siamese absolutism. He stated that he was prepared to grant a constitution to his people but that it would be given from the top down and not as the result of popular demand. He announced that on his return he would introduce a limited franchise through the channel of municipal councils, whereby widespread political experience might be gained. (A commission had been formed in 1927 to study this problem, but four years had passed without material results.) To give body to his democratic words, the king for the first time in Siamese history shook hands with his subjects—the Siamese students then studying in the United States.

Although this interview seemed to foreshadow a great change, time passed and nothing more was done. There was a popular superstition that on the 150th anniversary of the Chakkri dynasty, in April 1932, the monarchy would be overthrown. But the celebration passed off tranquilly amid expressions of touching loyalty to the throne. The traditional paternal gesture from the king was

the construction of the Memorial Bridge across the Menam. Externally everything was as before.

In the cultural field, considerable progress was made during Prajadhipok's reign. Rama VI's library was presented to the nation along with new buildings to house it and was combined with the museum to form the Royal Institute of Literature, Architecture, and Fine Arts. A new edition of the *Tripitaka* was brought out as a memorial to the late king, and the King's College and the Royal Pages' College were amalgamated and named Vajiravudh's College. The Rotarian idea was introduced, and with it developed for the first time in Siam the concept of a critical forum. Prizes were instituted for the encouragement of Siamese literature and especially Buddhist writings. Improvements in wireless, rail, and air communications put Siam into closer contact with world thought; and communications within the country were also improved.

Perhaps the most important event in the economic field was the institution of the new tariff, which resulted in an annual increase in revenues averaging Tcs. 110,000,000. In 1928 the Currency Act linked the tical with gold; and a significant step in the direction of government regulation of the national economy was taken with the promulgation of the Act for the Control of Commercial Undertakings of Public Utility. Government authorization became essential for such businesses as insurance, banking, and *crédit foncier*. In the same year various public health laws were passed, and the following year the Medical Act was amended to make qualifications more stringent for doctors. A new Immigration Law came into force in 1927, and an Immigration Department was founded to tighten up restrictions on foreign arrivals. As in the previous reign, there was no reform of the judiciary, which was still under the thumb of the administration and notoriously open to bribery.

In April 1931, as a result of the world depression, a Department of Agricultural Research and a Department of Commercial Intelligence were organized. It had been found almost impossible to get accurate economic information from abroad, and the establishment of Trade Commissioners in Siam's chief markets was designed to fill this gap. The government was now forced to abandon its *laissez-faire* policy and to spend money to help its people just at a time when the depression was cutting into its financial capacity to help.

The political crisis of October 1931 was the curtain-raiser to the drama that was to take place a little more than six months later. As usual, it arose as a result of personal rivalries within the Cabinet during one of the king's prolonged absences abroad. This time the chief figures were a close friend of Prajadhipok, Prince Bovaradej, formerly Viceroy of Chiangmai and now Minister of War, and Prince Purachatra of Kambaeng-Bejra, half-brother to the king and the extremely able Minister of Communications. For long a slightly veiled antagonism had existed between them on the subject of commercial aviation.

A Cabinet crisis, in which personal influence and prestige played the outstanding role, developed in May 1931, when the promotion of ninety-two army officers by Bovaradej was invalidated by the Minister of Finance, Phya Kormarakul Montri, as being contrary to the policy of retrenchment. Since the officers had already been informed of their promotion, the Cabinet was inclined to support Bovaradej; but Purachatra, who claimed that, if this measure were sanctioned, all the departments would begin to demand extra funds, strongly supported the Minister of Finance. Acrimonious altercations followed, in the course of which the Cabinet cautiously refused to make any decision, referring the matter to the king by cable. In the meantime, Bovaradej tentatively resigned and left Bangkok; and Purachatra precipitated the most serious Cabinet crisis in years by threatening to resign too.

This crisis had a wider significance than a struggle between two powerful personalities. Bovaradej was popular with the army, and a set-back to him meant trouble with that potentially dangerous body. On the other hand, Purachatra's stand symbolized that of the Princes of the Blood and threatened a split between the royal and non-royal princes in the Cabinet, which in turn meant schism in the royal family. There was a general feeling that the Supreme Council had lost public confidence and that an important change was about to take place, possibly in the form of government, after the king's return.

At the end of March 1931 the budget showed a deficit of Tcs. 11,000,000. The publication of this fact was followed by a salary cut in the civil service of 5 to 10 per cent. In November 1931 the vernacular press dared to advocate the institution of an income and

land tax in spite of the inevitable opposition of high government officials, who were also the biggest landowners in Siam. The customs tariff was raised, but the low price of rice persisted and continued to be the most important factor in the economic situation. In September, when England went off the gold standard, Burma, Siam's chief rival in the rice market, was also affected. That same autumn Siam vainly tried to raise a loan in Paris and New York.

Concessions to the current depression were evidenced by the employment, in several of the Ministries, of men unable to pay the poll tax; and remission of its payment was generally extended from September 30 to January 1. In November 1931 the immigration fee was increased to Tcs. 45 in order to increase the revenues and check the inflow of Chinese. Further economies were made in January 1932 when the Siamese Legations in Rome and Berlin were closed down; and the dismissal of foreign advisers in the interests of economy continued. In February new taxes were announced with the promise that they would not fall on the producer, and import duties were again raised. Great anxiety was felt over the heavy outflow of gold. Unrest was recognized as fairly general at this time, but all articulate organs attributed it to the depression rather than to the governmental system.

The new taxes announced in February turned out to be a bomb-shell when they materialized in April. All salaries over Tcs. 600 a year were to be taxed, with the result that the burden fell principally on the white collar class, which was least able to stand the strain in view of the rising cost of living. An additional and fairly empty gesture to tax unearned incomes was productive neither of revenue nor of appeasement. Although there was some slight agitation at this time for "no taxation without representation," it took no positive form; but it marked the beginning of a political awareness on the part of the Siamese people.

After months of deliberation the Government suspended the gold standard in May 1932; as a result, the commercial balance rallied, and the worst phase of the crisis seemed to be over. Unlike most countries that went off the gold standard, Siam was not forced off because her supply of gold was low; she took this step to help the farmer by stimulating the export trade, especially to the silver-controlled markets. However, many felt that this step should have

been taken months before, when the farmers' crops were still in their own hands.

In spite of the depression and the measures taken by the government to offset it, the cause of the *coup d'état* of June 1932 was not primarily economic. The government's economies had certainly aroused resentment in the official class, which was both numerous and influential in the capital; but a general realization that the depression was a world, and not a local, phenomenon, as well as the tradition of respectful submission to authority, made this class incapable of staging a revolt. The lack of big industries in the country meant that there was only a comparatively small group of unemployed; there were no labor organizations; and commerce was entirely in foreign hands. The depression did not cause the revolt, but it afforded a convenient background and facilitated its execution.

Groups of European-trained junior officials, largely drawn from the middle class, were the theorists behind the revolt. The great majority had been educated in democratic countries, where they had come into contact with radical theories. On their return to Siam their theoretical discontent was increased by the impossibility of rising in the civil service as long as all the key positions were held by princes. At first they were too unorganized, too lethargic, and too respectful to those of princely birth to take any steps; but in the 1920's their discontent steadily grew more acute as a result of Rama VI's extravagant favoritism and Prajadhipok's drastic pruning of the civil service. Their leader was a brilliant young Paris-trained lawyer, Luang Pradit, whose followers were as devoted to him personally as they were to his ideas.

This student-official group was reinforced by a number of army officers actuated by grievances against some of the autocratic princes and by salary cuts, who were led by two German-trained Colonels, Phya Bahol and Phya Song. The divergence of views between these two sets of allies made their union uneasy and unnatural and soon developed into a fundamental antagonism.

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## V · HISTORY

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### III. THE CONSTITUTIONAL RÉGIME

#### *The Coup d'État of June 24, 1932*

Rumors were rife throughout the uneasy spring of 1932 that certain elements were organizing to effect some drastic change; but few people, not even the government, took such a prospect seriously. The revolt was well timed. The king was away at the seashore; the head of the navy was at sea; and the Chief of Staff was touring the northern provinces.

At dawn on June 24 a military procession took orderly possession of the Throne Hall Square and of the building itself. Detachments were at once sent to the homes of the princes forming the Supreme Council and of other high officials bidding them come at once to the Throne Hall. Everything passed off quietly; the whole revolution counted only two victims, one of them an officer who was killed defending the palace gates.

During the morning a manifesto was published throughout the city by the People's Party justifying their action. This manifesto reproached the king with deceiving the hopes he had aroused at the beginning of his reign by continuing to rule as an absolute monarch and by bestowing all government positions on his relatives and favorites regardless of their qualifications. The king had deliberately kept his people from knowing this, and in any case the people would have had no chance to voice their complaints. Officials had continued to satisfy their aristocratic greed, accepting bribes and spending the country's money for their own interests. The government had treated the people like slaves and animals and had done nothing to offset the depression. The manifesto added that, if the king did not accept the constitution, a republic would be proclaimed.

Simultaneously a letter was sent to the king and later made pub-

lic, asking him to stay on the throne as a constitutional monarch; if he refused, another king would be chosen from the royal family. As this letter was signed by three military leaders, the manifesto was probably the work of the civilian elements; thus from the outset the divergence in their respective viewpoints was apparent.

The program outlined in the manifesto is constantly referred to as the embodiment of the basic principles of the People's Party. The announced aims of the new régime were the maintenance of national independence, peace, and public security, and the improvement of economic conditions, especially the relief of unemployment. It guaranteed popular government for the people's welfare, education and equal rights for all, and the abolition of the privileges of the princes. The members of the royal family then in the hands of the People's Party were held responsible for any counter-measures that might be taken, and the king was required to take action within an hour after receiving the manifesto. The king promptly accepted the constitution, saying that he had long favored such a form of government, and left Hua Hin next day for the capital. The Prince of Nagor Syarga, who had been made head of the government during the king's absence and was one of the first officials to be detained by the rebels, publicly urged the avoidance of useless bloodshed; and the king's rapid acquiescence made a peaceful issue possible.

The people remained passive throughout. A curious throng pressed around the Throne Hall, but there were no demonstrations. The general order was so complete that the shops, which had closed on the morning of June 24, reopened one by one during the course of the afternoon.

On the king's arrival in Bangkok on the morning of June 26, he was presented with a draft of the proposed constitution by a delegation of the People's Party headed by Luang Pradit. When they entered his presence, the king rose saying, "I rise in honor of the People's Party," and promised a reply to the drafted constitution on the following day. On June 27 it was announced that he had given his consent to the provisional constitution although it broke completely with Thai traditions by relegating the king to an extremely effaced position; practically the only prerogative he retained was the right of pardon. The Supreme and Privy Councils



were dissolved, and the legislative and executive authority was vested in the Assembly of the People's Party and its subordinate committee.

The first effect of the king's consent was the release of the princely hostages on their oath not to work against the revolution. The Prince of Nagor Svarga voluntarily left Siam at once "in the interests of the country's peace"; and Prince Damrong, one of the royal princes whom the new order would have liked to retain, retired to Penang with many other Siamese of the old régime. Although no important position was left to the princes in the new government, no vindictiveness was shown; and at first it was even said that they would be treated in every way like anyone else. Later, however, the princes were excluded from ministerial posts and were eliminated almost wholly from the army. Practically all the high-ranking officers, excepting those who had participated in the *coup*, were retired.

In keeping with the new government's very mild policy was its objection to the word revolution as applied to the *coup d'état* since it wished to emphasize that the change had been effected with the king's consent. The new leaders even tried to curb the strong sentiments expressed in the vernacular press about the inefficiency and graft of the princes' régime. More substantial tolerance was shown in the large pensions granted to retired officials for past services, notably to Prince Devawongse.

Such foreign opinion as was expressed up to the eve of the revolution was unanimous in its belief that democracy would be a long-maturing process and that the postponement of the king's proposed constitution was justified. The complete silence and passivity of the people when the manifesto was read to them showed that the movement did not come from them. The suddenness of the *coup* explains its success; it was accomplished by a comparatively small group in a few hours. The official classes made curiously little protest; they had been discontented by the salaries tax, but they still yearned only for government jobs and were psychologically docile towards any government that employed them. Hence their willingness to exchange princely patronage for that of any group in power.

On June 28 a public lecture was given at the Law School, in

the course of which the people were asked for contributions, since nothing could be taken from the Treasury under the existing circumstances. All citizens, women included, had been taken into the Party at the outset for the sake of their subscriptions; and the Party also set up a kind of itinerant lecture bureau to popularize the revolution in the provinces. At first attention was paid to the scores of petitions that inundated the government, which incidentally were the only positive evidence of popular support; but as most of them simply aired personal grievances, the government, after granting many of the requests, was eventually obliged to turn a deaf ear to them—merely saying that they would be made the basis of a detailed inquiry.

Like their prototypes in the French Revolution of 1789, the leaders of the Siam *coup* assigned to themselves a secondary role in the new government. A short period of dictatorship was exercised by the military leaders of the revolution from June 24-29, after which the leaders of the People's Party nominated a new Senate, composed of seventy members, who in turn appointed an Executive Committee of fifteen, which inherited the king's wide prerogatives. The king could still propose amendments to laws voted by the Senate, but he had not the right of veto. The revolutionaries thus showed their suspicion of the king by reducing the royal power to a mere shadow.

The Executive Committee was empowered to promulgate laws and control the Ministers, who thereby became merely its agents. Although the principle of popular sovereignty was guaranteed in the constitution, the government became in reality a party dictatorship. The excuse given was its provisional character; the Senate was to be replaced by an Assembly to be elected within six months' time. But members of the existing Senate could be re-elected, and no one could be a candidate for the Assembly unless chosen by the Senate; thus a party dictatorship seemed inevitable for the ten-year period until universal suffrage should become effective.

The man chosen by the leaders of the *coup* as President of the Executive Council was Phya Mano, who had been the able President of the Bangkok Court of Appeals under the old régime and had had no previous connection with the revolutionaries. The President of the Senate was also a former official, the Minister of

Education under Rama VI. The choice of such men had a soothing effect on conservative opinion, but the cleavage between these men and the revolutionary leaders was soon felt. Although the actual split occurred over a political issue, the fundamental difference in viewpoint was on matters of economic policy; the irreconcilability of their respective stands did not become evident, however, until after the promulgation of the permanent constitution in December. In the meantime, the government was of a conservative cast; it kept order and pursued a sound financial policy. Nevertheless, its lack of confidence in popular support was apparent in the armed guards everywhere evident and in a mild-appearing Press Act, which nevertheless effected a rigorous censorship.

In an interview given on July 7, Phya Mano emphasized that the financial policy of the old régime would be continued and that retrenchment for economy motives would be pushed forward, especially in regard to the salaries of high officials. Some departments were amalgamated—the Revenue Department with the Ministry of Finance, for instance—and the handling of all government stores was centralized under the control of a single purchasing agency under the Minister of Finance. The army and navy, in which the Siamese princes had tended to make their careers in preference to the civil service, were purged of reactionary elements. Certain of the recently imposed taxes that fell heavily on the poorer classes, such as the gabelle and taxes on fruit-trees and gardens, were immediately abolished; and a new tax on banking and insurance companies was announced, along with a few tariff changes. It was also announced that an income tax would be substituted for the hated salaries tax, and that a complete statement of the country's financial position would be issued. Despite the depression and the deficit, the financial foundations of the country were sound.

In September the motor tax was lowered, and interest rates on loans were limited by statute. Another important law prohibited the confiscation of the property of indebted farmers in payment of their debts; this was well received at first but soon proved to be anything but a solution to the insolvency problems of the rural population. In November a Cooperative Paddy-Trading Society was formally opened, with the government's approval, to develop

paddy exports and help the trade generally; and plans for a state paper factory and brewery were discussed at the same time.

The educated classes, who had been excluded from the new Government as possibly reactionary, and the foreigners resident in Siam, became increasingly apprehensive lest the constitutional régime should be tending towards communism. The Executive Council, in their opinion, was too close to the Soviet model. At the beginning of August 1932 the Comintern sent a congratulatory message to the People's Party, and on the next day communist leaflets were distributed in the streets of Bangkok. The impression of fear given by the government's armed guards was contagious, and the general anxiety increased steadily. A feeling grew during the late summer and fall that a new *coup* was imminent either by the reactionary elements or by the communists and their Chinese supporters, and rumors that the princes had sent their valuables abroad led to a further withdrawal of foreign capital. The public was not reassured by the Amnesty Act, passed on September 9, pardoning all deserters from the army and navy.

On September 30, in the streets of Bangkok and five other towns, communist leaflets were distributed in Siamese, Chinese, and English, exhorting the people to establish a soviet government. Labor strikes, unimportant in themselves but potentially serious, began to break out spasmodically; and unrest was rumored among civil servants and in certain sections of the army. Many Siamese newspapers were suspended or suppressed altogether, especially if they printed news relative to military movements; and this censorship was attributed to the government's fear of foreign intervention since France at the time was very uneasy as a result of a contemporaneous communist outbreak in Indo-China.

By November the government evidenced a conservative reaction to this inroad of radicalism, the most serious in Siam up to that time. Communist literature was seized, and certain Chinese newspapers were refused entry into the country. But the most curious and pronounced manifestation of conservatism was shown in connection with the promulgation of the permanent constitution in December. A month before it was signed by the king, the committee in charge of its drafting submitted to the Senate and the press the text bearing Phya Mano's signature. Commentaries were

appended to show the principles on which the work had been based and describing what was called the effort to enlist the king's cooperation. In reality, the draft had been prepared in strict collaboration with the king and enormously increased his powers over those allotted to him by the provisional constitution.

### *The New Constitution*

On December 7 a curious ceremony took place in the palace, which could probably have occurred in no other place but Siam. Thirty members of the Senate, among whom were the authors of the manifesto of June 24, were presented to the king by Phya Mano, who offered the king a bouquet, candles, and incense. Luang Pradit then read a statement acknowledging the benefits that the princes of the Chakkri dynasty had lavished on Siam and asked the king's pardon for the disparaging words uttered against his family in the heat of the June *coup d'état*. The king replied that he was touched by this generous gesture and that he would forget the past and invoke heaven's blessing on the People's Party.

Five days later, at the hour chosen as propitious by astrologers, the constitution was promulgated in an impressive ceremony in the Throne Room. The audience included press representatives for the first time and the men who had been sentenced for their participation in the abortive plot of 1912. After the king and Phya Mano had appended their signatures to the document, it was shown to the people amid popular demonstrations of pleasure. The constitution was very different from the one presented to the king six months before and represented a personal triumph for his tact and ability, as well as for the forces of conservatism. The framework of the new constitution was similar to the old in its main outlines, but the balance between the various powers within this framework had been radically altered.

Except for a few minor differences, this constitution belongs to the conventional type of constitutional monarchy adopted in Europe after 1830. The unity of the kingdom is declared with all distinctions of race and religion obliterated, even to the names of Malay and Lao, though there is a conspicuous silence about the status of the Chinese. Equality before the law is guaranteed, and a wholly new section deals with the question of civil and religious liberties as balanced by the civic duties owed by all Siamese. The

principle of popular sovereignty is retained from the previous document, but the temporary nomination of half the Assembly altered the constitution on the vital issue of free election. Its only justification lay in the fact that it was a transitional measure suited to an undeveloped and politically inexperienced country.

Legislative power, budgetary control, and the power to interpret the constitution are vested in a unicameral Assembly; but its enactments must not run counter to the League of Nations Covenant—a sadly anachronistic touch. Amendment is made difficult by the proviso requiring that amendments must be passed twice by a three-fourths majority. The Assembly is elected every four years, and candidates for election must satisfy certain educational requirements, be Siamese, have reached twenty-three years of age, reside in the district for which they are standing, and be neither spendthrifts nor drug addicts. Ministers are made definitely responsible to the Assembly and must resign after a vote of non-confidence. A curious precaution against Siamese impulsiveness and inexperience is the stipulation that a vote of confidence in the Cabinet or in individual Ministers cannot be taken the same day as the discussion; this paves the way for the exercise of the Siamese talent for compromise.

But the greatest point of difference between the new constitution and the old lies in the sphere of the executive. The king can dissolve the Assembly, even without the Cabinet's approval; but elections for a new Assembly must be held within three months. He retains the rights of pardon and veto, but the Assembly can override his veto by a second vote. He can enact emergency decrees, which need only be countersigned by one responsible Minister. He must respect international treaties and cannot concede territory without the Assembly's consent. He can propose legislation and control the Assembly in any conflict that may arise between the legislative and executive powers.

The king is defined as sacred and inviolable and as defender of the Buddhist faith; princes of the royal family cannot hold office as deputies or Ministers but can serve as advisers and diplomats. This ruling was announced as a safeguard to the prestige of the dynasty. The safeguards against a party dictatorship, which loomed so large in the provisional constitution, lie in a prohibition against the imposition of orders by any party on its members who

are also members of the Assembly. Even the name of the People's Party has vanished from the permanent constitution.

The residue of the executive power is vested in a State Council, which is the constitution's most original contribution. Unlike a European Cabinet, it combines the functions of Cabinet with Privy Council. Two-fifths of its members are named by the king, but the number of members can vary between fifteen and twenty-five. The Council is responsible to the Assembly.

This Council represents a compromise between the divergent views of Luang Pradit and Phya Mano. It is very different from the former Executive Committee, which emanated exclusively from the Assembly; for the Assembly now retains only a preponderant influence in the choice of its members. The President and fourteen out of the maximum of twenty-four Councillors must belong to the Assembly, which can in turn dismiss them by a non-confidence vote. The king himself can name ten Councillors outside the Assembly; and herein lies his important, if indirect, influence. Owing to fear of the evils of one-man power, the constitution did not institute the office of Prime Minister; but it was later found that a premiership was necessary to the efficient working of the Council. Ministers can resign individually as well as collectively.

The rigidity of the constitution and the institutions it establishes shows how conscious its authors were of Siam's lack of a political past. It could not grow out of custom and tradition but had to be created on purely theoretical grounds. Part of its inelasticity was due to the need felt at that time for stability after so sudden and basic a change. Control and balance are not directly achieved through the separation of powers, but through the whole judicial system on the summit of whose pyramidal structure the Dika Court is placed. The Dika is supposed to insure unity of jurisprudence and to serve as the ultimate judge of constitutionality. There are no separate courts of administrative justice such as exist in France.

### *Phya Mano's Government*

At the moment when the constitution was promulgated, it looked as if the Siamese talent for compromise and common sense

had brought about a happy solution. Fears generally relaxed, and all forces seemed to have accepted the revolution. Government policy had received a unanimous vote of approval in the first Assembly meeting held on October 18, 1932; the spirit of compromise had prevailed in the choice of Ministers and the modification of the constitution; and courteous relations were established with the king.

But almost at once storm clouds appeared. Not only was the depression still a vital factor in creating unrest; but there was always the fear that the radical elements had not renounced far-reaching reforms, directed not only against the old régime but against the conservatives within the existing government. Phya Mano, the new Premier, wanted to go no farther along revolutionary paths.

In January 1933 an issue came up that has continued to trouble Siam to this day; for it concerns an integral part of democratic machinery—the formation of political parties. A petition to form a Nationalist Party among army officers and high officials was rejected by the government as inadvisable from the point of view of national discipline. By refusing to sanction this organization the government was, of course, violating its self-assigned principles, especially as the new party leaders stated explicitly that they were not organizing in opposition to the government, but simply because they considered that a single party was undemocratic. As a way out of this awkward situation, the government announced that it would alter the political character of the People's Party; henceforth no military man, even on the retired list, and no civil servant, even in the provinces where efforts had been made previously to extend party membership, could belong. Since all educated Siamese were either in the military or civil services, this move spelt the demise of the People's Party and caused grave dissatisfaction. It was generally recognized that such an eclipse of the People's Party was precisely what the sponsors of the Nationalist Party were aiming at.

A startling sequel to the attempt to form a Nationalist Party, which contributed to the general nervousness, was the attempted assassination in January of Phya Sena Songgram, one of the chief promoters of the new party. He was head of the Palace Guards, a



royalist, and a favorite of the Prince of Nagor Svarga, and had been one of the two casualties of the June 24 *coup*. As an outstanding opponent of the revolution, he was feared by the new government; and this crime was not unnaturally attributed to the terrorist element among the radical leaders. There was a general fear that renewed violence would break out and that the government was not in control of the situation. At this time, also, increased communist activity in the provinces resulted in the arrest of ten members of the Young Communist Party of Siam.

In late February it was rumored that a serious split had occurred in the State Council. These rumors were the first indication the public received of the serious disagreement that had arisen among the State Councillors, which had originally come up in an Assembly session. Phya Mano, whose break with the old régime had been a matter of personal motives rather than principle, was regarded as head of the group of moderates who dominated the State Council in opposition to the progressive elements under Luang Pradit, who commanded a majority in the Assembly. The first stormy scene in the Assembly occurred during the discussion of the draft law for electing Assembly representatives, and divergent views were so vehemently expressed that scenes of physical violence ensued.

Phya Mano was determined to oust Luang Pradit and his group; and he chose as his issue the scheme of national economy advocated by Luang Pradit, which had been read by comparatively few people. Phya Mano, in an interview with the press, stated that it involved nationalization of the land, labor, and industry, and that investigation had proved it to be communistic. Defenders of the scheme pointed out that it had never been shown to the public; that it was merely liberal and designed to relieve the poor, especially the unemployed; and that its principles were only moderately socialistic. Luang Pradit himself hotly denied that he was a communist.

Phya Mano widely publicized his hostility to the scheme and rallied to his side all the forces of conservatism, which included Phya Bahol and Phya Song. Even the king was drawn into the lists when he returned the plan to Luang Pradit with a written criticism, in which he ironically said that if Luang Pradit had not copied Lenin then Lenin had copied Luang Pradit. The king was

so pleased with his comments that he ordered 3,000 copies to be printed by the Light Sentence Gaol for distribution, but this was not carried out as Phya Mano preferred the issue to die after it had served its purpose.

Not content with so simple a victory, Phya Mano carried the battle to the Assembly to crush Luang Pradit's important following there. Stating that he had reason to fear an armed *coup*—a charge that was never substantiated—he had all Assembly members searched for firearms on their way into the Hall. This action was followed the next day, April 1, 1933, by a Royal Decree proroguing the Assembly until new elections could be held. A law was passed simultaneously making communism a crime punishable by ten years' imprisonment and a fine. The machinery of constitutional government had broken down very early in the game.

This decree dissolving the Assembly was signed by all but five members of the Council, and among the signatories were both Phya Bahol and Phya Song. It greatly strengthened the new alliance between the military and conservative groups. The new State Council was virtually the same as before, except for Luang Pradit and his followers; and its most important members were Phya Srivisar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Phya Rajawangsan, spokesman of the navy. The legislative power was to be exercised henceforth by the king with the assent of the new Council, now limited to twenty members. These extreme measures were attributed to the attempt of a minority to institute vital economic changes that constituted a menace to the state. It was declared that impairment of the constitution was only temporary, and that new elections would take place as soon as possible. However, it looked as if a return to the old régime was foreshadowed with the elimination of all opposition. Although he still had an enthusiastic following, Luang Pradit was sent into virtual exile "to continue his studies in France" on a government pension.

Phya Mano showed at once that he was not going to tolerate criticism. The newly formed Publicity Bureau issued virtually no reports and printed only copies of new Acts. The Premier closed down a few papers, including one owned by Prince Varnvaidya, which ventured to criticize his action against Luang Pradit as high-handed and to say that some good had existed in the latter's scheme.

The press was warned not to publish anything contrary to what the government expected of them, and the British papers proved particularly cordial. Malaya approved of a conservative government as more likely to safeguard British interests, and the ever-cautious *Bangkok Times* stated that Phya Mano's action marked a necessary step in completing the original revolution and agreed that communist propaganda was a serious menace.<sup>1</sup> Talk went around that Luang Pradit was a dangerous communist, affiliated with Moscow; and even the liberal *Daily Mail* branded him thus in an editorial<sup>2</sup> approving the government's action as patriotic and wise. Luang Pradit's followers were kicked upstairs and given titles and were forbidden to publicize their views.

Showing that his *coup* had been well planned, Phya Mano accompanied his decree proroguing the Assembly by the announcement of a series of reassuring economic projects. The government, he said, recognized that Siam was economically as well as politically in her infancy and that there must be a national policy to exploit national resources. He promised a preliminary survey of resources and experiments in productive public works—the latter to be directed by an Economic Council. The Government would control or participate in public utilities—the word for which had to be coined in Siamese—especially of an agricultural cooperative nature. Vacant land would be assigned to the jobless, and government control of silos and milling established. Phya Mano was trying to steal Luang Pradit's thunder; the day of *laissez-faire* was definitely over.

On the same day a satisfactory budget was published for the kingdom. It was indeed remarkable that during so revolutionary a year Siam's finances had not been adversely affected. There was even a favorable trade balance for 1932–33 despite the large export of bullion, which was probably caused by Siam's abandonment of the gold standard and the flight of princely capital. The budget did show, however, that there had been no corresponding general upheaval in the lives of the masses. Immigration fees had been increased under Phya Mano to Tcs. 100 from the previous moderate sum of Tcs. 30–40. This had to some extent relieved unemployment and satisfied advocates of checking Chinese immigration and the possible infiltration of communist ideas. An all-round increase

in the tariff, beginning March 4, increased taxation on business; a projected income tax forecast greater revenues; and expenditure was reduced by retiring a large number of men in both the civil and military services. In May a successful internal loan of Tcs. 10,000,000 was taken up in about a week.

On the administrative side, Phya Mano carried out the original electoral plan that had first precipitated the struggle with Luang Pradit and succeeded in endowing the country with effective electoral machinery. But in spite of his obvious ability as an administrator, his government became increasingly unpopular. On the pretext of a "red danger," he increased the budgetary allotment for defense. He assumed a dictatorial attitude towards the Assembly and showed an ever-increasing tendency to interfere with the freedom of the press. Nevertheless, despite the censorship, some newspapers continued to express regret that the Assembly had been dissolved and Luang Pradit exiled.

Cars filled with troops were constantly seen in Bangkok's streets; civil jobs were given more and more often to officers and men who had held them under the old régime, and a general militarization of the whole administration was feared. Phya Mano soothingly said that the budgetary increases were for equipment purchases only, and for a few months it looked as if his policy had proved entirely successful. He completely dominated the Council; and together with Phya Srivisar he had the confidence of the king, who was cooperating more and more with the administration. General fear was felt that Siam might be lapsing into a mild dictatorship, if not a return to the absolute monarchy with only a slightly different cast; and that pressure was being brought to bear on the electorate for the return of conservatives to replace the former liberal representatives. Phya Mano was taking steps to consolidate his position so that he could oust the military—the last survivors among the original revolutionaries.

But he made several serious mistakes in tactics. He established himself so firmly with the adherents of the old régime and ultra-conservatives that he drifted away from the men on whose support he ultimately depended to stay in power. Two-thirds of the dissolved Assembly and one-third of the State Councillors were military officers. Discounting them on account of their lack of a

political and economic program, he forgot their latent power and that the memory of Luang Pradit was still green among his numerous followers. Moreover, by breaking the bridge between the two revolutionary groups he was destroying the idealism that had motivated them and was putting a premium upon becoming a tool of the government rather than upon independent patriotism. By bringing the king into the fray on his side, Phya Mano had rendered a grave disservice to Prajadhipok, who thereby lost his impartial isolation from political strife when he was led into his tasteless attack on Luang Pradit. Although he had contributed money from his own income to make up remissions in taxation, his action in dissolving the Assembly without setting any date for new elections revealed to the people that he was fundamentally against the revolution.

Army leaders became alarmed at Phya Mano's obvious preparations for a second purge. They registered a strong protest against the government's policy by offering their resignations, which Phya Mano was delighted to accept as it saved him the trouble of having to resort to force. There was a good deal of popular indignation at their having been so obviously eased out, and a delegation of working men asked Phya Bahol to reconsider his decision. The chief military leaders concerned were Phya Bahol, Phya Song, Phya Riddhi, and Phra Prasasana, all of whom had been prime movers in the *coup d'état* of 1932; but they had also committed themselves to the decree dissolving the Assembly and to the exile of Luang Pradit.

### *The Second Coup d'Etat*

Less than three months after Phya Mano's triumph and only four days before the first anniversary of the *coup d'état* of 1932, Phya Bahol, with a few sailors and soldiers in armoured cars, occupied the palace that was then the seat of government without striking a blow. The three leaders of the Phya Mano Government were arrested and forced to resign; and Phya Bahol at once telegraphed his loyalty to the king, who, as usual during crises, was at Hua Hin, stating that Phya Mano had violated the constitution. The king was asked to recall the Assembly, to appoint a new Council, and in general to return to constitutional government; and communiqués

to this effect were issued to reassure the public. The king at once agreed, but his prompt acquiescence did not efface the impression caused by his April decree that he was really not in sympathy with the new régime. He asked Phya Bahol to head the new Council; and the Assembly, numbering fifty members, convened in an extraordinary session on June 22 and confirmed Phya Bahol as head of the government. Phya Bahol kept insisting that he was a warrior and not a politician; but despite his provisional acceptance and frequent attempts to resign, this *faute-de-mieux* choice survived until December 1938.

The new Council was naturally composed of Phya Bahol's followers, among whom were two officers with a brilliant future, Luang Bipul Songgram and Luang Sindhu Songgramjaya. On June 30 Phya Song announced that he would retire to the provinces, while Phra Prasasana continued on in the army. The new government proclaimed itself as the defender of the constitution and anti-communist; and a conference of representatives of the local banks and Chambers of Commerce was called, to whom it was emphatically stated that the government's fiscal and foreign policies would remain unaltered.

However, conservatives and radicals alike fastened upon the return of Luang Pradit as the burning issue. He was still popular; and his ability was sorely needed by the military group, who were lacking in political experience. But Phya Bahol declared that Luang Pradit would not be recalled until he had been cleared of the charge of communism. He also stated his dislike of press censorship, saying that he welcomed constructive criticism and would be glad to open Assembly meetings to the press and public, which was done in September 1933. This provoked a slight but temporary recrudescence of the petitions epidemic.

The revengeless character of Phya Bahol's accession was due partly to his naturally benevolent temperament and partly to the fact that he had been compromised by his share in the decree of April dissolving the Assembly. When a group of students petitioned on June 29 that the Phya Mano Government be impeached for unconstitutional administration, they forgot that Phya Bahol's signature had also been appended to this decree.

This demand for impeachment reached a sensational climax on

July 20, when there was a demand for an official inquiry in the Assembly. Phya Bahol was chiefly instrumental in getting the matter dropped, and eventually the Assembly approved all the laws passed under the Mano régime.

The king showed his confidence in the new government by returning to the capital at once and pleading for peace and unity in the first radio talk in which a Siamese monarch ever addressed his people. Nevertheless, despite the king's appeal and Phya Bahol's conciliatory measures, the series of political upheavals that had occurred during the previous year had weakened the confidence felt by the people in the government. On July 16 a sensational article written in the usually well-informed and semi-official *Srikrung Daily News* retailed an alleged attempt to overthrow the government. This would have been unimportant in itself had it not been for the subsequent action taken on it by two officers, both members of the State Council, Luang Bipul and Luang Subbha Jalasaya. These two men took it upon themselves to send letters to all those suspected of having participated in the alleged conspiracy, warning them of drastic action if they persisted in their evil doing.

Naturally these letters evoked a vigorous denial from all the recipients, one of whom asked for a public trial. The officers' action not only aroused criticism in the press but provoked a denial of prescience by the Premier, which gave color to the then current theory that Phya Bahol was only a pawn in the hands of the more aggressive younger officers, who seemed to have little confidence in the government as then constituted. The atmosphere of insecurity increased; the chief malcontents were still the adherents of the old régime—the princes, their retainers, and the officers and officials who had been forcibly retired. There was a general visible disillusionment with the joys of democracy and a tense expectation of another of those convulsions by which the revolution of 1932 was completing itself.

The focal point of the general disquietude was the return of Luang Pradit, to which the government, after much vacillation, had given an uneasy assent. Its fears that it would further alarm the already antagonized conservative classes, who foresaw a nightmare of increased taxation and a revival of the scheme for nationalizing

land and industry, proved justified. When Luang Pradit returned on September 29 after a six months' absence, he was enthusiastically received by a delegation of law students and laborers; and the fear of his great popularity, and particularly of his influence with Phya Bahol, grew apace. Although he was not immediately given any official position other than membership in the State Council, everyone felt that a change in economic policy was imminent. Not only were traditional conservatives alarmed, but even men of the calibre of Phya Song and Phra Prasasana were so strongly opposed that they left the country on an "inspection tour" at government expense. The government was well aware of the unrest and of the fact that trouble was brewing, but it underestimated its magnitude.

### *The Bovaradej Revolt*

Early in the morning of October 12, troops from Korat, later joined by others from Nagor Svarga and Ayuthia, were reported to be marching on Bangkok to force the resignation of Phya Bahol's Government. The Premier's personal popularity was, however, responsible for the loyalty of the Rajburi troops. About 10:30 in the morning the rebels occupied the airport, Don Muang, and then proceeded towards the city limits, where government troops were guarding the entrances to the capital. The revolt was instigated by Prince Bovaradej, a cousin of Prajadhipok and ex-Minister of War; but the troops were under the command of Phya Sri Siddhi Songgram, a retired army officer. After taking Don Muang, the latter sent an ultimatum to the government demanding its immediate resignation. Manifestos were distributed by airplane among the people saying that the revolt aimed at restoring the king's constitutional powers, of which the Bahol Government had deprived him, and at removing the influence of Luang Pradit and the military elements from politics.

In Bangkok martial law was immediately declared; the telegraph lines out of Bangkok were cut; and no trains either arrived or departed on that momentous day. Government troops under Luang Bipul were sent to the northern suburbs, where the rebels awaited battle; and the city was turned into an armed camp. But fighting did not immediately ensue as both sides showed extreme reluctance to shed blood. Siamese Buddhists have a natural disin-



clination to violence, and both sides were inspired by the patriotic desire not to cause any internal disorder that might invite foreign intervention.

After thirty hours of fruitless negotiation, the battle started in the late afternoon of Friday, October 13. The fighting took place between Bangsue and Bang Khan and lasted intermittently for four days—fortunately entirely outside the city, which was thereby saved from damage. Finally the government troops drove back the rebels and retook Don Muang, and Prince Bovaradej was reported in flight. When it was learned that he had taken the plane to Saigon, the whole revolt collapsed around Bangkok. From start to finish it had been a royalist movement, which lacked popular support, since no one wanted a return of government by the princes.

Bovaradej's capitulation was partly inspired by patriotic motives. As a military man, he would hardly have attempted a revolt unless he had been fairly sure of success; but he had probably counted too heavily on the support of Bangkok and on the effect of a show of force on the government. He also miscalculated the attitude of the Rajburi Garrison, whose loyalty prevented the Petchaburi troops from joining the rebels farther south. It is not improbable that he also counted on the navy, which remained neutral. Under these circumstances Bovaradej, who had been forced to act before his preparations were completed, and who was anxious at all costs to avoid bloodshed and foreign intervention, preferred to withdraw without delivering the blow that he was probably equipped to strike.

While the fighting was in progress, rumors were rife in Bangkok that Bovaradej was supported by the king and that his troops were consequently much stronger than the government's forces. The king temporarily quashed this by wiring a brief message deploring Bovaradej's connection with the revolt, but aside from this he did not publicly support either side. It was obvious that he had previous knowledge of the revolt and that it had been discussed at Hua Hin; and since he assumed the rôle of spectator in the struggle that ensued, the government reaped all the prestige from the victory. By throwing the weight of his support on either side, the king could have exerted considerable influence on the outcome; but his

inaction was consistent with his previous refusals to take stands on other major issues.

Whatever his motives, the king's attitude of neutrality lent color to the rumors that his sympathies were with the rebels. After the revolt had spread to the southern provinces, he moved south from Hua Hin to Singora in the demilitarized zone adjacent to British Malaya; and there he remained in spite of the government's request that he return to Bangkok in order to calm the populace, which was alarmed by the spread of the revolt to the south. His refusal to return to his post in time of danger inevitably lowered his prestige and lessened the general confidence in him; and when it became known that most of the royal princes and their retainers had lent moral and financial support to the revolt, his behavior was viewed with open suspicion.

The collapse of the revolt was not completely evident for about two weeks; and even after the military issue was settled, the government was faced with difficult problems. It was generally recognized that the king and the nobility were seriously implicated and that the aims of Bovaradej were shared by the more conservative elements throughout the country; and many provincial officials and officers had openly sympathized with the rebels. As a result, the gaols were filled with war and political prisoners, foremost among whom was Prince Siddhiporn, the brother of Bovaradej; and many others, including several prominent women, were arrested on suspicion and held without trial.

The revolt spelt the death of the aristocracy and greatly strengthened the position of the middle class. But middle-class opinion was also divided, and this division was reflected in the State Council. The Luang Pradit element had gained confidence through the failure of the revolt and now saw its opportunity to carry out some of its radical ideas; but this prospect alarmed some of the more conservative Councillors, who promptly resigned. Moreover, Luang Pradit had antagonized the educated group, as was shown by the fact that the so-called liberal *Daily Mail* had been the headquarters of the intelligentsia's participation in the revolt.

The Council, and especially the military moderates who were at the head of the government, dealt with the problem ably and with tact. They sent a delegation to persuade the king to return,

fearing to alienate him because of the still great prestige of his office; and he finally acceded when the Assembly reopened in December. But it was hard for him to accept his new position. If he had been a puppet before, at least he had been controlled by his relatives and social equals and not by a changing group of commoners who made his office increasingly untenable.

After presiding over the Assembly opening in December, the king announced that he wanted to go abroad for treatment for his eyesight, which was steadily failing. The government discouraged this idea, considering it inadvisable for the king to leave the country at so critical a period. But when the king insisted, the government finally gave way; and Prince Narisra, an older member of the royal family, was appointed Regent in his absence. Just before he left early in January 1934, this sick and disillusioned monarch broadcast a plea for unity and for confidence in Phya Bahol's Government. His departure marked another step in the progressive break-up of the Chakkri dynasty.

### *The Elections of November 1933*

As a result of the widespread influence of Bovaradej sympathizers throughout the provinces, the government decided to embark on a campaign of propaganda under the auspices of the Publicity Bureau. Copies of the constitution were carried to the different towns with solemn ceremonial, and radio talks were made to the people promising constructive reforms.

The government then proceeded to re-establish democratic procedure under very trying conditions. The electoral system, as laid down by Phya Mano, had been retained; and elections were already in progress in some of the provinces when the revolt broke out. However, owing to the uncertainty and fear inspired by Bovaradej's failure, and because these were the first popular elections held in Siam, there was a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm. Hardly a tenth of the electorate turned out, and comparatively few presented themselves as candidates. Seventy-eight representatives were elected and an equal number named by the king. The candidates elected included eighteen retired minor civil servants, fifteen lawyers, eight retired high officials, three of the revolutionaries condemned for a share in the 1912 plot, and two teachers. As

to those named by the king, they included nineteen functionaries and forty-nine officers, five of whom were from the navy.

The technique of the elections was simple. Candidates and electors met on the day and hour fixed in an entertainment hall or temple lent for the occasion. Each candidate was allowed fifteen minutes in which to outline his program. Like any Western politician, he promised the usual array of desirable public works for his constituents and a reduction in taxation and followed this up with the customary attack on his opponent. Many of the candidates spoke too fast to be understood or put on vaudeville stunts. After a reasonable time had elapsed for discussion among the voters and for questions to be put to the candidates, the vote was taken. When the results were announced, a garland of flowers was placed around the victor's neck. All this took place in an atmosphere of calm amiability bordering on indifference.

The successive political upheavals had forced out of public life first the radicals and then the conservatives. Only thirty-one out of the original seventy members of the People's Party remained in the new Assembly. In the absence of organized parties, it was hard to appraise the results accurately; but it seemed as if the majority of those elected were followers of Luang Pradit. As a result, two of his supporters, Phra Sarasasana and Phra Sarasati, were appointed Minister of Education and Minister of Economic Affairs respectively; and Luang Pradit himself was made Minister of the Interior. Before his appointment, however, Luang Pradit was cleared of the charge of communism in an amazing and much publicized trial. A commission headed by the French and English legal advisers was especially charged with considering his political views; but in reality there was no public examination of his famous economic scheme, and communism was defined only in general terms. The whole trial did little to alter the general conviction that Luang Pradit was still a dangerous radical.

### *New Conspiracies*

The first part of 1934 was a comparatively quiet period; there were a few abortive conspiracies, but the public only learned about them after they had been suppressed. At the end of March a law was passed reducing civil and military pensions. This affected a

good proportion of the Siamese middle class and nobility, who were dependent on their pensions, and was a means of spreading further discontent at a time when the harsh treatment of political prisoners was being seriously criticized. Additional resentment was aroused by the imposition of an inheritance tax and an income tax.

Discontent came to a head in early April in a *coup d'état* that failed. This plot, in which civil and military elements both participated, had been known to the police since January; and about one hundred persons were arrested just twenty-four hours before it was to have been carried out. As the government failed to issue reassuring communiqués, rumor ran rife. Burmese and Indian troops were said to be massing along the frontiers, and the excitement was so great in peninsular Siam that many prepared to flee with their families and their possessions. Urgent questions were put in the Assembly; and the Premier pacified the people, if not English opinion, by the statement: "Ours is only a small country while England is a great power, which has a sense of good morals and will not want to bully us unnecessarily."<sup>3</sup>

That same month Luang Bipul resigned from the State Council—a move taken as representing his opposition to the allegedly communistic element in the Cabinet. Indeed, part of the current unrest was attributed to a supposedly radical scheme that the Minister of Economic Affairs was known to be elaborating.<sup>4</sup> On July 8 the government issued a denial of the rumor that it had allotted Tcs. 25,000,000 for the purpose of initiating government competition with existing commercial houses, but the foreigners in Siam persisted in thinking that Luang Pradit's original economic plan was being reconsidered. The only justification for this fear was the establishment by the government of a number of committees for the regulation and reorganization of certain trades and industries. Official spokesmen insisted that foreign interests would be accorded the same consideration as before, but this reassurance was discounted in view of the government's announced intention of operating public utilities and undertaking industrial projects. However, in the reorganization that occurred after the Council resigned over its defeat on the rubber restriction issue, Phra Sarasati was not retained; and the more radical features he had inserted into government projects disappeared with him.

In July the Publicity Bureau announced that a new conspiracy had been nipped in the bud by the government and that the Assembly had that same day passed a Firearms Act. In August Luang Pradit, as Minister of the Interior, publicly denied the rumor that the civil and military elements in the government were in serious disagreement and that he himself was head of the Siamese Communist Party. Another conspiracy was discovered and successfully foiled, but every day a new plot was expected. Bangkok offered the daily spectacle of armored cars and machine-gun squads patrolling the streets.

### *The September Crisis*

At the nineteenth meeting of the Assembly in September, the government submitted an urgent motion asking for ratification of the rubber agreement negotiated some months before in London. When, in the course of the debate, the government was forced to admit that the figures on which the quota had been negotiated were faulty and inaccurately represented the situation, the Assembly turned down the quota by seventy-three to twenty-five votes; and for the first time in Siamese history the State Council resigned.

However, the resigning government was still popular with the Assembly, which it wholly dominated. In fact, the confidence shown in Phya Bahol was so great that it became obvious that no one else could form a Ministry. Consequently, despite his repeated requests to be allowed to retire, he was once more drafted into service as Premier and also took over the Foreign Affairs portfolio under the aegis of Prince Varnvaidya. Two Councillors were forced to resign for their share in the rubber agreement; but the dropping of the radical Phra Sarasati, to whom the military were especially hostile, represented the only major change in what was largely a political reshuffle. Phya Song, the political dark horse, again refused Phya Bahol's invitation to join the Council; and Luang Bipul returned to the Cabinet as minister without portfolio.

On September 24 a vote of confidence in the new Government was passed by the Assembly by a majority of fifty. The importance of the whole episode lay in the fact that Siam for the first time used constitutional rather than violent means to effect a change of government. The policy of the new government was in no way dif-

ferent from that of its predecessor, and there was no relaxation of the process of arrest and trial of the persons accused of plotting against the former government. The communist leaflet campaign continued in full vigor, accompanied by the customary attempt to counteract it by the distribution of miniature copies of the constitution. Opposition to the government was dormant but not dead, and business continued to suffer from uncertainty as to how extensive would be the economic experimentation that the government seemed almost sure to try.

### *The King's Abdication*

In the same month of September, three Assembly bills amending the Penal Code, regulating military establishments, and defining criminal procedure, were returned by the king for reconsideration. Before this, on August 6, the Assembly had already shown its attitude towards the king by passing the inheritance tax over his veto, which had been based on his rejection of the principle of separating Crown from private properties for purposes of taxation. A compromise on this issue had been reached by exempting Crown properties from taxation but placing imposts on the king's private properties. Although the Assembly's action on that occasion showed the decreasing esteem in which the king was already held, the new conflict proved to be much more serious and open.

The most important feature of the three new bills was the abolition of the necessity of appending the king's written signature to the death sentence. It was well known that the king objected on principle to capital punishment for any crime, and particularly for participation in the recent revolt in which so many of his friends and relatives had been involved. Many of the government leaders were impatient at this attitude and wanted to strengthen their own hands in the event of further revolts. But the king regarded the new bill as a serious abrogation of his ancient prerogatives as "Lord of Life." Although he retained the power to grant amnesty, he regarded the abolition of his right to sign the death warrant as against custom, against his convictions, and against democratic practice. The Assembly, however, did not uphold these objections and passed the laws over the king's veto by seventy-five to thirty-six votes, the members of the State Council abstaining from voting.

It was thus made clear that the king's vote power no longer bore any weight, since only a bare majority in the Assembly was required to override it. This further step in the progressive limitation of his powers offended the king so deeply that on October 27 he intimated that he would abdicate if his wishes were not met by the Assembly.

Censorship of the press was so strict in Siam that, although this scanty item was widely publicized by the world press, the vast majority of the Siamese people had no idea that the king was threatening to abdicate. The average Siamese was certainly not interested in the constitutional point at issue between the king and the Assembly, but the former's prestige was still so great that the government feared an open breach. The king's absence in England further complicated the issue; and in early November a delegation sailed to negotiate with him in London.

The king, however, remained adamant; and all attempts of the delegation to reach a compromise solution failed. In a general letter addressed to the Siamese people, signed March 2, 1935, Prajadhipok announced his abdication from the throne, his assumption of the title of Prince of Sukhodaya, and his intention of residing for the future in England. He embodied in this letter a criticism of Phya Bahol's Government and the conditions under which he would resume the throne. His public statements created the impression abroad that his abdication had been caused by Siam's failure to abide by democracy—an interesting statement in view of the absence of any serious and independent efforts on his part to give his people democracy. The conditions stipulated for his return were the resignation of the Assembly and the election of a new one by popular vote; the passage of an Act stipulating that the royal veto could only be overridden by a three-fourths majority or a plebiscite; the granting of specific guarantees of freedom of speech and of the press; the exclusion of the army and navy from the government; the release of political prisoners and their judgment by regular courts; and the reinstatement of officials dismissed for political offenses. These conditions had been submitted to the Assembly on January 31, and their subsequent general publication caused little excitement among the people.

Although Prajadhipok's nephew, Prince Ananda Mahidol, was



immediately proclaimed king after the former's abdication, there was a general feeling that the Chakkri dynasty had ceased to be indissolubly allied to Siam's destiny. This sentiment was further strengthened by the fact that the new king was a minor, living in Switzerland. The Regency Council of three, appointed to act during his minority, was a far more compact body than the one Chulalongkorn had set up when he toured Europe in 1897. One of the most interesting features of this Council was its inclusion of Chao Phya Yomarej, now recalled from what had been gracefully known as retirement.

The king's abdication was the ultimate scene in the struggle between the old and new régimes, which had really been settled by the failure of Bovaradej. The next period marked a further struggle between the two major factions in the new régime, which were outwardly welded into a united front by the personality of Phya Bahol and by the new orientation of foreign relations. As a result of this friction in the government, the Assembly was increasingly able to assert itself as an independent political force.

In August another of Siam's periodic conspiracies broke out, this time among the non-commissioned army officers, fifteen of whom were arrested. Luang Bipul hastily issued the statement that it was an isolated plot in which only an insignificant group was implicated. It was important enough, however, for the Assembly to hold secret meetings, which resulted in the extension of the powers of the Special Court, which had been inoperative for some time, to cover all cases concerned with rebellion and internal disorders.

Soon after this affair Luang Pradit, accompanied by his collaborator and former colleague, Phra Sarasasana, departed on what, for the Minister of the Interior, seemed to be a mysterious tour abroad. His departure was followed by the ostentatious resignation from an important committee of Luang Voraniti Prija, a member of the Assembly and instigator of several labor strikes, who threatened interesting revelations. An open break in the Council was only obviated by the Premier's determination to maintain a united and constitutional front.

Nevertheless, between July and October a series of changes in the State Council kept public speculation at fever pitch. Four

members retired; and the total number of Councillors was increased to twenty-one, the largest number to date and only four short of the legal maximum. The chief significance of these changes lay in the fact that four of the new members came from the military and police services.

On August 3 the Premier announced an important increase in the budgetary allotment for the Ministry of Defense, which was designed to enable the government to take a more independent attitude towards foreign nations and interests, but which had the additional effect of further strengthening the internal political position of the army. A definite trend towards military dictatorship was becoming increasingly apparent. The army was succeeding in appointing more and more officers to the civil administration throughout all government departments; the reorganization of local government, which was undertaken at this time, included many undemocratic provisions; provincial office became appointive; and the censorship was tightened.

In the absence abroad of Luang Pradit, the ascendancy of Luang Bipul was firmly established. Perhaps Phya Bahol's valuable asset as Premier lay in his ability to keep in check the rival forces within the government and to play umpire successfully between his perpetually quarreling colleagues and their adherents. This anarchical tendency in the government, held in check by so slender a thread, was a grave potential danger in that it made a succession of *coups d'état* almost inevitable. However, a new element, also handicapped by anarchical tendencies and lack of organization, was just becoming discernible on the political horizon. The power of the Assembly was growing, largely as a consequence of the weakening of the Council resulting from the struggle among the leaders for control.

### *The Rise of the Assembly*

Still half-nominated, once prorogued, suffering from public indifference at the polls and from dictatorial refusal to permit party organization among its members, the Assembly had from its inception been severely handicapped in its evolution as a political force. Although open to the charges of corruption commonly leveled at officials everywhere and particularly in the East, the

majority of Assembly members were conscientious but inexperienced and untrained. They were inclined to debate interminably on some unimportant point, such as medals for deserving members or policemen's uniforms; and they rarely offered any real opposition to the government's wishes. When, to everyone's intense surprise, they overthrew the government on the rubber restriction issue, the reasons set forth by the deputies were not of such a calibre as to make Assembly opposition respected as a parliamentary institution.

The State Council had long dominated the Assembly, just as it dominated the bureaucracy, by a mixture of paternalism and the force of established authority. Siamese traditions are based on patronage and subservience to superiors, who hand down already formulated plans to inferiors, who are expected to carry them out without question. Another Assembly weakness lay in its unrepresentative character. Apart from the question of the indifference of the electorate, the Siamese have always been the ruling element; and minorities, no matter how important in the country's economy, have never been politically represented. Almost all the deputies were professional men—largely lawyers and former functionaries—and the appointive members always included a considerable military element.

Nevertheless, the Assembly was at last beginning to assert itself. The dissatisfaction caused by the defense budget and the increasing number of military appointments to civil posts was further fanned by an opium scandal, which broke in the fall, and by the inefficiency of the Minister of Economic Affairs. As a result, three members, led by Nai Dong Indra, the representative from Ubol, combined to file a vote of non-confidence in the State Council.

In the long debate that ensued, the Minister of Agriculture stated that he and his colleagues were prepared to die if it could be proved that they had been guilty of any major error;<sup>5</sup> and another Councillor threatened that, if the government were defeated, not a single member would return to office again. It was also claimed that a non-confidence vote would have serious repercussions abroad. But the sponsors of the motion replied that they were less interested in overthrowing the government than in effecting an overdue reorganization. However, the motion was defeated;

and no immediate changes were made in the personnel of the government.

In February 1936 the Council was reorganized, but its strongly military character and its general policy remained unchanged. The Council now included five colonels and one lieutenant-colonel from the army, two captains and a lieutenant-commander from the navy, and a colonel of police. Meanwhile, Luang Pradit had returned, with his prestige enhanced by the successful conversion of Siam's six per cent loan; and he was given the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with instructions to negotiate a new batch of treaties. This was taken by the foreign press to indicate a new orientation of Siam's foreign policy towards Japan and away from Great Britain.

At this time it was again rumored that Phya Song was returning to the political scene; but in January he once more left Siam, this time for China, accompanied by Phra Siddhi. When pressed for his real motives in leaving, he replied that, since his non-participation in politics had led his followers to doubt the Government party, he thought it wise to leave Siam for the time being; and that living was cheaper in China anyway. He returned in March, however, and again he was begged by various prominent Councillors to participate in the government. He finally agreed to serve his country, not in a political capacity, but in training higher officers at Chiangmai. Again in late August a score of Assembly members petitioned the Premier to recall Phya Song from his Chiangmai post to the State Council; but they became frightened when they realized that he would have to fill the post then occupied by Luang Siddhu—a politically powerful figure whom no one wished to alienate. Thus Phya Song continued to sulk in his tent; and till the beginning of 1939 he remained an unknown quantity in the political field.

It was unfortunate, in view of the continued state of unrest, that the government almost never issued communiqués and invariably failed to deny the wild rumors that were continually circulating. For example, the administration never troubled to inform the public about the purpose or the success of Luang Pradit's trip abroad; and no reasons were ever given for the retirement of resigning Councillors. The failure of the government ever since the

revolution to issue regular economic bulletins was another source of uneasiness. Moreover, gossip about the Council's reorganization got mixed up with the discussion of the budget in February, when it was desirable from every point of view that the budget should be kept clear of politics. There was a general feeling that important changes in both the political and economic spheres were pending, and that the Council shifts were but the beginning of a fundamental reorganization. In reality, however, the government remained virtually unchanged for three years and continued to practice a consistently sound financial policy.

The return of Luang Pradit considerably strengthened the civil party, but the balance was again weighted on the military side in May when Luang Bipul was made acting-Premier during Phya Bahol's absence on sick leave. In an interview for a special issue of the *Siam News* on May 20, Luang Bipul complained that too many people thought that democracy meant license to do as they pleased. If Siam could make more progress through a dictatorship, such a policy should be adopted, especially as it was very effective in eradicating communism. The *Bangkok Times* cautiously confined its comments to calling this a "sturdy viewpoint";<sup>6</sup> but his words brought such a flood of protests from the civilian elements that he hastened to say that democracy was his dearest ideal. Moreover, in a radio address a few days later, he joined two other Ministers in paying his respects to the constitution and the dynasty and in lauding the merits of civil liberties and political parties under a democratic régime.

For the next few months little opportunity arose for the Assembly to assert its will or show its temper towards the government. But during the budget debate in the spring of 1937, the elected members displayed a definitely bolder tone than the year before in their hostility to the heavy military allotment and on the issue of the taxation of Crown property. Led by Nai Dong Indra, the opposition protested that the funds allotted for education and public works were woefully inadequate when compared with the defense allowance, which amounted to 25 per cent of the total budget. Nor was the Assembly impressed by the argument of the Minister of Defense, who defended his expenditures over the radio by tactlessly picturing a war between Japan and Great Britain, in

which Siam might be crushed. This speech, intended for home consumption, succeeded only in causing considerable alarm in foreign circles.

### *The Crown Lands Scandal*

Up to the time of the king's abdication, the Privy Purse Department of the Ministry of the Royal Household was in charge of the investment and management of the private funds of the king and his family and of the revenues from Crown properties. However, with the abolition of the Ministry of the Royal Household in 1935, the Privy Purse was placed under the control of the Premier's office.

On March 29, 1937, a bill was suddenly and urgently introduced into the Assembly providing for the classification of the king's property into the three categories of crown, state, and personal property; the exemption of the first two groups from taxation; and the transfer of the management of most of these properties to the Ministry of Finance. Two days later the bill was passed after a rather heated debate, but no publicity was given to its specific provisions until it was printed in the Government Gazette on July 19. In the interval between its passage and its promulgation, however, a considerable amount of the real estate included in the Crown properties had been sold to thirty-four persons, among whom were such high officials as Phra Riddhi Aganey, the Minister of Agriculture. The prices paid were considerably below the actual market value; and rumors to this effect were so widespread in Bangkok, and even throughout the country, that the government was strongly questioned about the matter in the Assembly in late July. The Premier's attempts to justify these purchases failed to convince the Assembly, and four Ministers and the Council of Regency resigned.

The Assembly was at once convened in secret session to consider these resignations and to appoint a new Regency Council and Premier. In the meantime, however, the Regency Council had put forward the claim that they had not resigned but only indicated their wish to do so. They added that they now wished to withdraw their original letters, and the Assembly was informed that the defense forces wished the Regency Council to remain in office. But

after a protracted and stormy debate, the Assembly voted to accept their resignations.

In the first few days of August, however, a new and unexpected factor appeared when the appointive members of the Assembly refrained from attending the sessions. It thus became obvious that any action taken by the elective members alone, such as their refusal to accept the withdrawal of the resignations, would not be endorsed by the powerful elements behind the appointive representatives. This impasse accounts for the fact that twelve days elapsed without any solution of the Ministerial crisis while secret negotiations were held between the various political factions. When on August 3 the military authorities placed guards at the wireless stations and post offices, rumors ran wild in Bangkok that this was the prelude to a military dictatorship.

That same day Phya Bahol broadcast the statement that he had been asked to remain in office but would do so only if he could be absolved of all guilt in the scandal. Pressure had apparently been brought to bear to hush up the whole affair by the reinstatement of all those formerly in power. Curiously enough, no public indignation over this turn of events was evidenced; even the press refrained from expressing more than a mild astonishment. The way was clearly open for a *coup d'état* by the Minister of Defense, but he lacked either the wish or the decisiveness to attempt it. Phya Bahol accepted his pledge of support on August 5, which was presumably given in return for the guarantee that a complete investigation of the Crown lands sales would be made.

Meanwhile, the entire Regency Council had been reinstated; and four days later Phya Bahol resumed the premiership after having been declared blameless by the Assembly. Very slight changes were made in the State Council: only three Ministers failed to be reappointed, two of whom were implicated in the land purchases. On August 11 the Assembly resumed its sittings.

The State Councillors who were restored to office were regarded as having been absolved from a share in the land scandal, but a determining factor in their reinstatement was the scarcity of trained administrators from whom to choose substitutes. Thus the Minister of Foreign Affairs was a man of exceptional ability and was in the midst of treaty negotiations; the Finance Minister was

the outstanding financial expert in the country and was needed to maintain the country's solvency; and the Premier was still the only man able to maintain the balance of power between the civil and military parties. The reappointment of the Regency Council was harder to understand. One of its members was undoubtedly involved; but the Council insisted on being retained or dismissed as a unit, and a public admission of its guilt would have lowered the prestige of the government both at home and abroad.

An interesting feature of the crisis was the marked increase of public interest in government affairs. As usual, wild rumors circulated; but there was a general belief, borne out by later developments, that no violence would ensue. Newspapers met with surprisingly little censorship. The *Siam Chronicle* and the *Nation*, which issued 'extras' for the first time in Siamese history, were complimented for the mildness of their reporting. The *Bangkok Times*, cautious as ever about taking sides, confined itself to the factual reporting of events with reprints of Malayan comments.

The mildness of the Assembly discussions and the willingness of its members to compromise were in the best Siamese tradition. Even the member who provoked the crisis received only two or three threatening letters, as a result of which he was given a military escort for a few days. Although they scolded one another, the members were careful to explain repeatedly to the Premier that he was exonerated of all blame. The result was that everything was tidily arranged, and everyone saved face. Thirty-three out of the thirty-four persons who had purchased Crown lands returned them.

This upheaval and readjustment showed that the State Council was still able to dominate the Assembly. Nevertheless, the nucleus for a formal opposition was for the first time revealed in the clear-cut division between the elected and the appointed members. Although everything in the end was outwardly as before, an important change had taken place beneath the surface. Moreover, the episode marked a clear if temporary victory for the civil element; the whole administration manifested a marked aversion to a major change in policy, and the military were shown to be unwilling to attempt to seize power. But perhaps the most notable feature of the whole affair was its orderly progress along parliamentary lines without the usual recourse to a *coup d'état*.



*The Elections of November 1937*

For the first time in Siam, candidates for the Assembly were elected by direct vote in November 1937. Most of the former members were not re-elected; but the Ubol representatives, who may be regarded as the Opposition leaders, were returned. The government tried to make the constitution a campaign issue, but no one opposed the principle of a constitution or advocated a return to the old régime. That question had been finally settled when Bovaradej's revolt was crushed. "Protect the Constitution" was a clever slogan got out by the government party, but the real issues were economic.

When economic issues are permitted to enter the realm of practical politics in Siam, they will split asunder every existing political group; for it is on economic bases alone that fundamental party lines can be founded and developed. The main socio-economic groups in Siam to-day are the farmers, the salaried class, and the business class. This fundamental division is being gradually recognized by the government; and in an interview shortly before his resignation, Phya Bahol advocated the formation of political parties as an inherent constitutional right on the ground that it would make for cleaner politics and would provide the government with the salutary check of a formidable Opposition.

The 1937 elections produced more candidates of better quality than the 1934 elections; moreover, more money was spent on their campaigns, and there was a generous distribution of gratuities in one form or another. This was particularly effective in Lampang, where 60 per cent of the population, a far bigger percentage than elsewhere, turned out to vote. The candidate who talked the most glibly received more votes than those with a record for past achievements. Liberal promises were made in the manner of Occidental politicians, except that they were more picturesque and naïve. One candidate distributed a shoe to each voter promising the mate if he were elected. Gigantic posters were pasted up on house fronts, on tricycles, and under glass slabs in restaurants. Even in the cinema a photograph would be shown with the appended advice:

"If you can't find a better candidate, vote for ——"

One candidate paraded the streets in a pushcart, making speeches and distributing pamphlets. In the absence of organized parties, everyone used his own method. Only 26 per cent of the total population voted. It was a Sunday; it rained; people couldn't be bothered; and anyway they had other things to do. Moreover, in spite of extensive publicity, the procedure was still a general mystery and many ballots were spoiled. There were no counterfeit votes, no brawls or assaults; the atmosphere was one of calm indifference.

There was a slight indication of regionalism, north versus south, especially where there were candidates of local origin. A Lao candidate in the north automatically received a large vote simply because he was running against a southern Siamese. There was no literacy requirement; a surprising number of women voted, one to every three men. There was little realization generally that the votes cast had any bearing on the lives of the voters. It was simply thought that they were giving away a good job, and they voted for the younger candidate on the principle of giving the lad a chance.

When the new Assembly met on December 10, the State Council resigned. The new Council contained the same combination of political forces, but the new Assembly was considerably changed. Only eleven of the elective members formerly in the Assembly were returned, and the total membership had increased from 156 to 182. Phya Bahol again received a vote of confidence and was reappointed Premier.

### 1938

Apart from the return of the young King Ananda in November and three attempts to assassinate Luang Bipul, there were no striking developments in 1938; it was a year of evolution rather than revolution. The new government continued the policies of the old. Treaties were ratified with foreign powers, but they simply carried on the policy initiated by Chulalongkorn. The budget discussion, which broke all previous records in regard to length and intensity, took up all the old cries with the additional flourishes of a severe criticism of the Minister of Public Instruction and a demand for tax revision. One interesting development that carried over into 1939 was the first attempt at government interference in the administration of the Buddhist church.

This last mentioned departure was probably an outgrowth of the intensified nationalism that, more than any other development, has characterized the government and particularly the Assembly. Even the State Council recoiled before the Assembly's chauvinism. An important Labor Bill, embodying legislation regarding minimum hours and wages on the international pattern, was defeated in February; but in the following August it was brought up again, this time in an entirely Siamese form. As in the case of the discussions on the budget and the Shipping Bill (July 25), members evinced such an aggressive nationalism in their demands that foreigners be excluded from the benefit of the new regulations that the government had to point out soothingly that foreign skill and capital were temporarily essential to the country's development. The Assembly had to be reminded that the Siamese must first prepare themselves by showing enterprise and a willingness to be trained vocationally before ousting foreigners; and that Siam was but a small nation, which had to live on friendly terms with more powerful peoples.

Such was the reasoning put forward when a bill to lift the restrictions on the press, which was vociferously anti-foreign, was defeated by a large majority in January 24. There was considerable support in the Assembly for the proposal to assert the constitutional right of freedom of speech, especially regarding military matters; but the government was still strong enough to insist on continued censorship. When the new government and Premier took office in December 1938, stringent press control was still the policy, although revision of the Press Act was promised. A more tangible step towards an extension of civil liberties was taken when the Act Safeguarding the Constitution was repealed on July 27, with the result that thenceforth all persons indicted had the right to be tried in regular courts.

The most notable demonstration of the growing nationalism was the reaction to a lecture given by the head of the Fine Arts Department, Luang Vichitr. In it he compared the Chinese in Siam to the Jews in Germany, and in some circles his words were interpreted as an expression of the government's intention of driving the Chinese out of the country. An urgent question was raised in the Assembly, and for a time it looked as if this might be made

the issue for a non-confidence vote; but the government's denial of responsibility for its Minister's speech finally prevailed. The offending official was sent on a mission abroad, but the incident was not closed. Student demonstrations were held in favor of Luang Vichitr, and there were serious repercussions in the Assembly. One of the Ubol representatives, Nai Liang, whose question had precipitated the Crown Lands Scandal, was ducked in a pond by a number of the appointive members, including some military officers; and the elective delegates retaliated by not attending the sessions. Thus the breach between the elective and appointive members was further widened, and the development of the former into a self-conscious and determined opposition group was accelerated.

This conflict between the elective and appointive members and the growing determination of the former to assert their will in relation to the State Council, whose margin of control was steadily diminishing, was demonstrated soon after the above incident. A proposal was put forward in the Assembly that the rules of procedure should be amended in order to compel the government to give a more detailed explanation of the budget. The Minister of Finance defended the current procedure by saying that the fullest details were always given before the discussion was finally closed; but that their premature publication would lead to profiteering by unscrupulous persons, who could corner a commodity on which a tax was contemplated. Both the Premier and the Council stated categorically that the proposed amendment was unacceptable and impracticable, and that, if it were adopted, they would resign. When the vote was taken, the Ministers and many appointive members abstained from voting. Only 76 out of 183 members voted, but they carried the amendment by a majority of fourteen. This was the second occasion on which the Assembly had forced the government to resign, and this time the step was taken more consciously and involved a more vital issue than in the case of the rubber agreement.

The chief changes in the new Council were the appointment of Luang Bipul as Premier, following the retirement of Phya Bahol, and of Luang Pradit as Minister of Finance. There were indications that the latter was at last going to be allowed to carry out

part of his original economic scheme, and the first sign of this development was the long overdue effort to revise the taxation system. The new Premier retained the portfolio of Defense and took over that of the Interior—a move that was criticized in the Assembly debate of Christmas Day 1938. However, after a lengthy discussion, confidence was voted in the new government, with only two dissenting votes.

1939

In January 1939, despite severe censorship, the news of an abortive conspiracy led by Phya Song to restore Prajadhipok or the Prince of Nagor Svarga to the throne leaked out to the world press. The leaders of the revolt were either escorted to the Indo-Chinese frontier or imprisoned. Wholesale arrests were made; twenty-one persons were condemned to death; and many high army officers were retired. Prajadhipok, when he was interviewed in London, expressed no surprise at these periodic upheavals in Siam; and in reply to a direct question said that the Siamese people had never expressed to him a wish for his return. A few months later a suit was instituted by the government against the former king and queen for having wrongfully transferred Tcs. 6,250,000 of Crown property. Their pensions were withdrawn, and photographs of the royal family were removed from public buildings.

The implication of several members of the Assembly in this conspiracy permitted the new Premier to take sterner measures against the nascent opposition, although he never ceased to praise democracy in theory. Before this, an elected member had publicly advocated the dissolution of the second category of Assembly members; and there had been continued agitation for freer press laws and for permission to form political parties. But during the 1939 session the Assembly approved more government bills than ever before, and the budget was passed with the shortest discussion in the history of the Assembly. Either there was more spontaneous approval of the new financial and nationalistic measures of the government, or the Assembly was at least temporarily cowed. In any case, Assembly members' salaries were raised in recognition of their good behavior.

Measures interpreted as anti-foreign, such as the Liquid Fuel,

Tobacco, and Shipping Acts, stricter immigration laws, and more severe control of the Chinese, sailed serenely through the Assembly. The transient flirtation with communism had now definitely been replaced by an intense nationalism on the part of members and Ministers alike. The State Conventions issued by the government in July stated that Siamese should undertake no business or foreign agency that did not benefit the whole nation; and officials contracting marriages with aliens were required to obtain special permission. The change in name from Siam to Thailand, which was effected in June, was but the formal confirmation of official nationalism.

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## VI · FOREIGN RELATIONS

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### CHINA

An adequate history of Sino-Siamese relations will probably remain unwritten because of the scarcity of materials, particularly for the earliest periods. What survived of the Siamese records after the destruction of Ayuthia is chiefly legend and fantasy; it is on the Chinese travelers and historians that one must rely for data until the end of the eighteenth century, when Siamese materials become more reliable and plentiful.

In Chinese literature Siam is first referred to as *Chihtu*, or the red earth, probably because Siam's ancient capital lay in the laterite region.<sup>1</sup> Another Chinese name for Siam is *Hsienlo*, derived from the Sanskrit word for Siam, *Sayam*, or brown.<sup>2</sup> The first Siamese mission to China is ascribed to King Arunavati Ruang of *Sawanoloke*, possibly in the seventh century. It is problematical whether or not this was the continuation of a relationship originally established between the two countries in 607 A.D., when the first Chinese embassy came to Siam.

A Siamese fable recounts that King Ruang's voyage to China was undertaken in fulfilment of a prophecy, and that the Siamese monarch was able to speak fluently with the Chinese Emperor, which—if true—presupposes that a large number of Chinese were already settled in Siam. One is on firmer ground in the eleventh century when, about 1084, one of King Ruang's successors sent to China for artisans skilled in the art of casting cannon. Since that time artist-founders have flourished in Siam, making articles of *samrit*, or black bronze, and *thompat*, an enamelled metal. Siam's tradition of skilled *niello* work, particularly at Ligor, probably dates from the period of Chinese instruction, though it might have been introduced earlier by Indian artists.

In the north, in any case, Chinese influence is clearly seen in the porcelain industry, in methods of bronze casting, in the manu-

facture of firearms, and in the use of gunpowder. The increasingly close relations between the two countries were also evident in Siam's social life and political institutions. After the Thai emigration from Nan-chao in the thirteenth century, an Emperor of the Yuan dynasty sent an ambassador to Siam in 1282, when Sukhothai was still the capital. From that period Chinese culture definitely entered the country, and after 1373 contact between the two neighbors became more and more frequent.

Throughout the Ayuthian period there was an exchange of commodities and good wishes, culminating in 1592 when the king of Siam offered to send an army to aid China against Japan. It was refused, but the very offer would support the Chinese contention that Siam at that time was a tributary state. The relationship was certainly not clearly defined. The Siamese king is described in Chinese state records as a *wang*, or independent sovereign; but the Siamese were compelled to use the less convenient overland route to Peking via Canton.

The Siamese, however, even from the earliest days, regarded their envoys as ambassadors bearing gifts. This interpretation had the additional advantage of enabling them to take merchandise into China duty-free, with the result that these official voyages proved to be tempting commercial ventures as well.<sup>8</sup> According to records, these embassies continued regularly from 1281 to 1366, and probably triennially thereafter until the end of the eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth century they lapsed so completely that in 1869 the *Pekin Gazette* announced that tribute from Siam had just been paid for the first time in eighteen years.

It is curious that at this time, when the Chinese influence in Siam was at its height and when Siam was signing treaties with the Western powers, China refused to make a treaty with Siam and compelled the Siamese envoys to journey to Peking via Canton instead of by the Tientsin route, which Europeans used. This was an interesting reversal of the present situation, when the increasing numbers of Chinese in Siam are agitating for political representation through which to present their cause to the Siamese Government. Chinese influence at that time was still great but was rapidly giving way to European.

Although Chinese immigration into Siam has been going on



for centuries, usually for trading purposes, its character changed in the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1850 Chinese immigration averaged fifteen thousand annually, and this rate was steadily increasing. In the time of Phra Narai there were only three thousand Chinese settled permanently in the country.<sup>4</sup> They had been coming mostly overland from southern China, but in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they arrived more and more by sea from Hainan and the adjacent mainland ports. Siam's growing export trade, the endless civil strife in China, and the barriers raised against the Chinese in French Indo-China were the chief reasons for this increased flow. The surplus of immigration over repatriation from 1918 to 1929 was 400,000; and it is believed to have been even larger before the war.

At least 2,500,000 pure or half-breed Chinese live nowadays in Siam. Their blood relationship with the Thais is so pronounced that the many marriages that have occurred between Chinese men and Siamese women have had to bridge only a small racial gap. The offspring of these mixed marriages are called *lukchin*, and they are proud of their Chinese blood. Like similar hybrids in Cambodia, they seem to have retained the best qualities of both stocks; and almost all the outstanding men in Siamese history have had Chinese blood in their veins.

It was because they compensated Siamese inactivity that the Chinese received unusually favored treatment from the government in its most anti-European days. They taught Nang-Klao all they knew about commerce and created trade where none had existed before. Siam, "under a debasing tyranny, destitute of arts and commerce alike, offered a fair field for the development of their superiority."<sup>5</sup> The king, whose income was greatly increased by their activity, gave the Chinese such unbounded opportunities that their condition was better than that of Europeans, or even of the Siamese themselves. They were subjected to fewer vexatious proceedings and were allowed to purchase more commodities at a lower rate of duty than any other group.

Carl Gutzlaff, the first Protestant missionary to Siam, pictured their position less favorably in 1831. The Chinese from Canton were chiefly artisans and farmers in Siam; the few who came from Fukien were sailors or merchants; and those from Hainan became

peddlers or fishermen. Together "they formed the poorest yet most cheerful class in the country. They delight to live in wretchedness and filth and are anxious to conform to the vile habits of the Siamese."<sup>6</sup> In two generations, according to Gutzlaff, their children were indistinguishable from the Siamese. They enjoyed the titles bestowed upon them by the Siamese king, in return for which they became his slaves and were severely punished for the slightest disobedience. The Chinese cringed before their oppressors, paid heavy taxes for being exempted from military and *corvée* services, and labored from morning to night to feed their insolent and haughty tyrants, who thought it beneath their dignity to earn bread by their own efforts. In general it may be said that they certainly accepted Siamese law and did not seek to impose their own organization, with the exception of the secret societies, which flourish in Siam to this day. Many of these exist simply in the American Masonic sense, but others have political significance and provide a ready-made organization that is potentially dangerous to public order but is seemingly impossible to suppress.

Some years before Gutzlaff came to Siam the Triad Society formed a conspiracy. They seized some native craft at the mouth of the Menam after a fight and put to sea. Soon running out of provisions, they were easily captured and subsequently massacred or imprisoned by the Siamese. So completely were they suppressed that twenty years later Bowring saw no instance of Chinese resistance to Siamese authority; but he was ignorant of the Chantaburi outbreak in 1824, of another at Nakorn Chaisri in 1842, and still another at Langsuan in 1845.

However, Bowring did learn of a serious insurrection that had occurred in 1847 when a new tax was levied on sugar.<sup>7</sup> The Chinese had created and come to control the then flourishing sugar industry, which was the object of a new impost. The governor of Petriu, who was so imprudent as to visit the malcontents, was promptly seized and decapitated, his assailants taking flight immediately to nearby districts, where they proceeded to inaugurate a reign of terror. The Siamese troops sent against them behaved in a very cowardly manner considering that the Chinese whom they were besieging had only beans to fire and knew nothing of the art of fighting. It was supposed at the time that a general in-

surrection had been intended; and if it had materialized, Bowring was sure that the Siamese Government would have been unable to suppress it.

Bowring found some very wealthy Chinese in Bangkok in 1856, who had been raised to noble rank and had waxed prosperous from handling the opium trade and other state monopolies. Naturally these few plutocrats resented the freedom of trade initiated by his treaty, but Bowring's contention that the vast majority of Chinese in Siam were delighted by the emancipation that resulted therefrom corroborates Gutzlaff's statement that the Chinese would have liked to see the English control Siam.

Despite the cruel raids of the Ho bandits in the north and the ravages of the Cantonese pirates in the Gulf of Siam, the Chinese who settled in the country were a fairly law-abiding group despite the presence of some turbulent elements. They have left their mark on Siamese legislation only in laws against opium and other forms of smuggling, against secret societies, and for the enforced registration of partnerships. More recently their undigested influx has motivated changes in immigration laws and in the public school curriculum, though the Chinese are not specifically named therein.

With the modernization of Siam under Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, the status of the Chinese began gradually to change. They were still the privileged class in the country, as was shown by the number of Siamese who cultivated a queue in order to pass for Chinese.<sup>8</sup> They still did no military service or corvée duty and paid only a small triennial tax of four ticals. (However, although they were the most lightly taxed group in the kingdom, they were frequently imprisoned for evasion of taxes.) Not until 1909 were Chinese taxes made the same as Siamese.

The Siamese Government went so far as to cultivate the Chinese secret societies since they were thought to offset the associations of native Christians fostered by the French missionaries. This latter movement was considered particularly alarming after a Buddhist priest, who had been chaplain to the late Regent, turned Christian. But once encouraged, the Chinese societies flourished too mightily and were responsible for riots and for stimulating rival organizations; thus by 1889 there were six such virile and lawless bodies. Six years after the riots of 1889 came the next serious outbreak,

which took the form of fighting with firearms from behind street barricades. In that year the opposing factions of the Yee Heng and Su-lee Ku societies held one Bangkok district in a state of siege for three days; and the battle was only stopped through the intervention of Danish officers.<sup>9</sup>

In 1898 an English writer reported that these societies were nearly as powerful in Siam as the king himself.<sup>10</sup> They bowed to the government outwardly, but they really ridiculed it and attributed their freedom from official interference to fear. By 1906 these secret societies had increased to such proportions that they were keeping the police very busy maintaining order and trying to prevent the formation of new sects.

By this time a nationalist note was beginning to tinge the Siamese attitude. The Chinese then were averaging 1,200 immigrants monthly into Bangkok's port, and even more were landing in the peninsular states; about 40 per cent remained in the country, and about half of them married there. As early as 1888 the Siamese began discussing the restriction of immigration or the establishment of a Chinese protectorate analogous to the Singapore model, but it was abandoned as being too expensive a project. But for the first time the Siamese began to say that the Chinese came only as transients to Siam—to make money there and then return with it to the homeland. To gain wealth they were inaugurating a system of gambling that was degrading to the only too easily misled Siamese. They were called the Jews of Siam, as they were once again in 1938. They were accused of seeking monopolies in trade and industry and of crowding out the Siamese.<sup>11</sup> All this was strangely prophetic of the present similar but stronger attitude. Yet when Chinese immigration dropped in 1900 because of troubles in China, the ensuing labor shortage at once created difficulties for the shipping trade. Labor was comparatively well paid in Siam, and the supply was definitely limited. The Chinese, it was realized, were indispensable as laborers, government and business clerks, servants; and merchants.

Attempts to control the Chinese by law were of little use, and such measures as were taken were poorly handled. Although about 60 per cent of the Chinese immigrants were capable of reading their own language and no other, the Siamese Government refused to

print any of the regulations directly concerning them in the Chinese language.<sup>12</sup> If that had been done, much of the friction attending the enforcement of certain regulations on Chinese coolies might have been eliminated.

In 1897 a law was passed requiring the registration of every society; but after four years only two had registered although many of them were purely philanthropic and had no reason to fear the official hand. The suspicious Chinese thought that this was a preliminary to requiring them to do military service. Nor did an attempt to register servants get much further. In general the Chinese resented and eluded any official attempt to organize them or to keep them under surveillance.

In 1907 a Chinese commercial commissioner visited Siam, accompanied by an imposing suite and escorted by two cruisers. His announced aim was to inspect Siamese industries—which were nonexistent—and to improve commercial relations generally. He discreetly avoided discussion of political questions, particularly as at this time there was no question of the Chinese in Siam being maltreated although they lacked consular representation. That same year Chulalongkorn formulated publicly his attitude towards his Chinese subjects:

It has always been my policy that the Chinese in Siam should have the same opportunities for labor and for profit as are possessed by my own countrymen. I regard them not as foreigners but as one of the component parts of the kingdom and sharing in its prosperity and advancement.<sup>13</sup>

But a few years later events in China were destined to modify this all-embracing tolerance, as well as the character of the Chinese community in Siam.

It was the revolution of 1911 that changed the attitude of the Chinese towards the foreign countries in which they were domiciled; for Chinese nationalism crystallized earlier than did Siamese nationalism. Although in Siam they did not fight for a share in the local administration as they did in Malaya, they strongly supported China's struggle against foreign domination and were united more solidly than ever before by Sun Yat-sen's slogans. The manifestation that this new attitude assumed in Siam was the formation

of a cultural consciousness that resulted in the founding of Chinese schools and an insistence on equality of treatment with other powers. The new Chinese schools subsequently became a source of friction between the two peoples, but Siam refused to permit the establishment of consulates on the ground that the Chinese already enjoyed a privileged position.

Not only was Chinese immigration increasing in numbers during the second decade of the twentieth century, but its composition had radically altered. Statistics reveal that until 1910 only men came to Siam, but after that date there was a marked growth in the number of Chinese women immigrants. Their advent indicated the growing prosperity of the Chinese in Siam, as the mass of coolies who came to the country could not afford to marry. But what was much more important, it soon proved to be an obstacle to the assimilation of the Chinese, who had heretofore married Siamese women and adopted their ways—at least until they returned to China. This phenomenon intensified the new nationalism of the Chinese both at home and abroad.

Another manifestation of the growing Chinese nationalism was the revival of secret societies and the coercion exercised on recent immigrants to join these organizations.<sup>14</sup> The formation of secret organizations seems to correspond to some need in Asiatic society. The Siamese police have never been able to control this movement, which was reported, as recently as 1931, to be spreading among the lower classes of the Siamese themselves and even penetrating the police force.<sup>15</sup>

### *Chinese Schools*

When one or two Chinese are gathered together they start a school, and in Siam Chinese schools sprang up like mushrooms. The first teachers were only slightly more educated than their pupils and taught for almost no salary. As among the Chinese everywhere, they were divided by differences in dialect; only recently has the teaching of mandarin been adopted. Those Chinese who could afford to do so still sent their children back to China for their schooling.

The steadily stiffening attitude of the Siamese authorities to-

wards these Chinese schools should not have surprised the Chinese community. Since 1898 a scheme for national education had been in existence, and in 1919 a law was promulgated making primary education compulsory for all boys and girls between the ages of seven and fourteen. Two years before this, the Minister of Public Instruction had ruled that in every provincial school the director must speak Siamese and that three hours a week of the curriculum should be devoted to the study of that language. This ruling was a shock to Chinese conservatism and one that gained momentum as it was played up by certain journalists. But in actual practice, Chinese opposition and the impracticability of the laws resulted in very lax enforcement, at least until 1932.

In 1932, however, partly because of the intensified nationalism of the constitutional government and partly as a result of fear of communist propaganda in the schools, the law of 1919 was for the first time applied seriously in Bangkok and really affected Chinese schools because of the heavy concentration of Chinese in the capital. It imposed a minimum of twenty-five hours a week for teaching in the Siamese language; and Chinese teachers had to pass a stiff examination in their knowledge of Siamese.

As the result of certain press articles, feeling against these Siamese regulations was stirred up in the home country. China was already aroused over Siam's unique stand in the League vote censuring Japanese aggression and by the increase in the Siamese immigration fee and the stiffening of entry regulations generally. The Siamese defended these regulations on the ground that they applied to all foreigners and that they were fiscal and not political in their motivation. Nevertheless, Siam was feeling that she must assimilate the growing number of Chinese in the country, who now formed about a fourth of the total population, and that they must be made to choose definitely between their native and their adopted countries. Disclaiming any antagonism to the Chinese as such, the Siamese authorities insisted that they must themselves control the economic development of the country, which was now dominated by the Chinese to an extent out of proportion to their numbers and unsuited to their nationality.

Early in 1935 the Siamese Government served notice that all schools failing to comply with the Primary School Law of 1919

would be closed. The Chinese challenged the government to prove that they had not met the official requirements and asked for competitive examinations to be held between their pupils and those in Siamese schools. The Siamese Minister of Public Instruction was reported to have declared in a press interview that he intended to curtail foreigners generally from conducting schools in Siam, but that he could not begin everywhere at once.<sup>16</sup> He added that the Chinese schools gave instruction of political import—which the Chinese principals denied. An inquiry was made, and a few copies of Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles* were unearthed. The Chinese began to talk of establishing schools in Malaya, whereupon a ruling was made that any Chinese students leaving Siam would have to pay \$(Mex.) 500. By this time certain self-appointed delegates had gone to China to agitate there for a boycott of Siamese rice, which after a few months was declared in a small, voluntary way by some Cantonese merchants. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Bangkok still refused to have anything to do with politics, and many of Siam's leading Chinese opposed these petitions to Nanking. The Chamber joined the government in pointing out mitigating factors, such as the fact that Chinese was one of the languages taught in Siamese Government schools.

By 1936 the problem was no longer so acute. The boycott had proved to be a double-edged sword. It had not been wholeheartedly enforced from the Chinese end because it hit Chinese merchants in Siam as hard as Siamese producers. But the Siamese Government could not afford to ignore the Chinese rice market; and from this time on Chinese schools were actually more leniently treated, although the official attitude was outwardly as rigid as ever. The new syllabus got out by the Minister of Education dealt more sympathetically with the 205 purely Chinese schools in Bangkok, which continued to be urged, though less forcefully, to lose their private character and to become identified with the Siamese local schools. The Chinese themselves have also become less intransigent. They still teach largely in the Chinese language but change to Siamese when a posted scout reports that the inspector is coming. The whole Chinese problem until recently seemed to have been adroitly solved according to Oriental methods. The government veered away from violent attacks; it rounded up some criminals



and opium addicts, but it did not campaign directly against either the secret societies or the schools.

### *The Economic Factor*

Siam is a fertile, under-populated country and offers wonderful opportunities to the nearby masses of underfed and industrious Chinese. The Chinese come to Siam almost wholly from southern China; the majority are from Kwangtung, and most of the rest from Fukien. The Bangkok Chinese come chiefly from Swatow, with a sprinkling from Amoy and Hainan. The trades or professions that they enter are often determined by their origin in the homeland.<sup>17</sup> The survival of linguistic differences is shown in the Chinese schools and secret societies, which follow dialectal divisions. The Chinese have no clearcut geographical location, as have the Malays in Siam. About half a million of the 2,500,000 Chinese in the country live in Bangkok and the larger towns; and the rest are scattered in fishing villages along the coast, in the mining centres, and more recently in the north. Economically, the Chinese in Siam are distinctively urban, with minor agricultural activities largely confined to fruit and vegetable specialties for the Bangkok market and some regional pepper and sugar cultivation. In the peninsula they still own some of the rubber and tapioca plantations.

Even after the first immigration law was passed in 1927, anyone not suffering from trachoma could enter Siam upon payment of a landing fee of Tcs. 5 and a "process" fee of Tcs. 6.50. In the early days those who arrived indebted for their passage from China had to work off their obligation by doing the hardest kind of labor in the ports, in rail and road building, in mining, and as pullers of the lowly ricksha. Within the last decade the volume of immigration has been so great that it has become hard for the Chinese to find either lodging or jobs in Bangkok; as a result, they have been sent more and more into the interior, where they are put to work clearing off the jungle land. Although this is undeniable exploitation, the immigrants are nevertheless assured of a living and a certain degree of personal freedom. In some cases, however, it has taken almost a lifetime to pay off the debt. Moreover, the bonded immigrant often finds himself in competition with the Siamese farmers,

who are also, though in a different fashion, indebted to the wealthy Chinese.

Nevertheless, the majority of Chinese immigrants who arrive as impecunious coolies in Siam succeeded in saving a little capital through their amazing industry and frugality and their tight social structure. They soon rise to join the shop-owning class, of which Sampeng, the Chinese quarter of Bangkok, is the centre. All Siamese towns have streets filled with Chinese stores, which sell all the small imported articles.

In rural communities it is interesting to see how the modern means of transportation have helped the Chinese in his climb up the economic ladder. Formerly the Chinese penetrated the hinterland chiefly along the rivers and canals, turning their boats into shops whenever they came to a settlement, and sometimes establishing a permanent floating market if the town was also an administrative center. Chinese merchants later followed the railroad or even anticipated rail or road construction along a projected route. The Chinese always kept pace with, or were one step ahead of, the changing economy, whereas the Siamese simply used what the government created without attempting to exploit its full economic possibilities.<sup>18</sup> In rural markets the Chinese began buying up agricultural produce, chiefly rice, and were soon able to monopolize the position of middlemen. The whole rice trade, including its transportation and much of its milling, thus came into Chinese hands.

The "Chinese problem" in Siam came into existence only about thirty years ago. In the old days the upper classes, born to landed wealth and power, were glad to leave degrading tasks, including money-making, to the Chinese. The Siamese peasant was equally content to raise his rice crop and turn it over to Chinese middlemen to transport, mill, and export. The Chinese thus came to own and operate 80-90 per cent of the country's rice mills, to buy and transport the whole crop, and to export to China three-fourths of all the rice that was sent out of the country. Europeans supplied the big capital and technical direction, but the Chinese competently and profitably did all the rest. If the Chinese had been willing to identify themselves with the land of their adoption and economic success, no problem would have arisen. The Siamese get along well

with the Chinese as a social group, and the Siamese character needs those very qualities in which the Chinese excel.

The impermanence of the Chinese in Siam is a moot question. Five Chinese enter the country for every four who go back, but the absence of accurate statistics makes it hard to ascertain what proportion of these emigrants are commuters. One lugubrious indication of greater permanency in recent years is the growth of Chinese cemeteries in Siam, which have importance as a form of sentimental and financial investment.

The second way in which the Chinese fail to identify themselves with the country has both economic and nationalistic roots. The increasing immigration of Chinese women into Siam has succeeded in creating a state-within-a-state. In the early days the Chinese immigrants could not afford to bring their women, and this was only made possible by their participation in the growing export trade. But there was the additional trend, just before the war, towards a more conscious preservation of nationality, which in turn was allied to certain economic motives.

When a Chinese married a Siamese woman, the wife—not the husband—became head of the family and controlled its property and cash. The children were Siamese citizens by birth; they were so reported in the census and were liable to military service. Although the offspring of wholly Chinese parents were also regarded as Siamese and technically liable to the draft, they were conscripted as rarely as possible. The Siamese mother, also, was careful to see that her children were raised as Buddhists and Siamese, both in regard to customs and clothing. The problem might have been solved if the importation of Chinese women had meant that the whole family would remain in Siam, but it resulted in no greater permanency and simply made the whole family unit almost completely unassimilable.

In 1931 the Immigration Law was revised and tightened against those designated under the heading of communists, diseased, indigent, and undesirable aliens. The landing tax was raised to Tcs. 10, and an elastic literacy clause was added to bar Chinese transients and women. A further tax of Tcs. 30 was levied for the right of domicile; and a Chinese resident leaving the country had to obtain in advance a return passport, valid for two years and costing an-

other Tcs. 20. The Siamese were careful not to discriminate specifically against the Chinese, as the United States had so tactlessly done. The law was applicable to all foreigners but was obviously intended to control the Chinese, who resented these curtailments in view of their contributions to the country's development. As it turned out, these measures were not so effective as had been planned. Although the first steamer entering Bangkok after the new law had been passed carried forty-one passengers of whom twenty were rejected, the number of immigrants soon picked up. Thanks to the new educational movement in China many of the women were able to meet the literacy test, and the Chinese residents in Siam were prosperous enough to meet the increased immigration fee for incoming relatives.

At the same time that events in China were intensifying the nationalism of the Chinese in Siam, the installation of the constitutional régime stimulated the more tardy nationalism of the Siamese. Now that the old Siamese aristocracy was definitely out of the picture, the patriots who ran the government were self-made, middle-class men, who resented more than their predecessors the vital role played by the Chinese in their country's economy.

In May 1937 the immigration fee was again jacked up to a maximum of Tcs. 200, and though not immediately applied the natural result was a great increase in the number of Chinese smuggled into the country. This legal curtailment of immigration was accompanied by new labor legislation, which, like so many other measures, actually discriminated against the Chinese without doing so verbally. In 1935-36 laws were passed forcing rice mills to employ a 50 per cent minimum of Siamese workers, but they were found impossible to carry out owing to the shortage of Siamese labor. In 1938 another bill brought forward for the reservation of certain types of work for Siamese labor proved impracticable for the same reason.

There was a third type of pre-revolutionary anti-Chinese legislation that was taken over by the constitutional government. Though it affected the Chinese most of all, it also affected European business houses, since its motivation was primarily fiscal. A law passed in May 1931, tersely entitled "Act for the Control of Auction Sales and Dealing in Old Things," was the object of a peti-

tion by two hundred Chinese shopkeepers, who protested against the clause requiring them to know the Siamese language well enough to keep their accounts therein. The expense of keeping a Siamese bookkeeper for this purpose would, they asserted, throw them into bankruptcy.

The object of this law, which proved impossible to enforce, was to facilitate the taxation of Chinese incomes and to control the amount of money exported by the Chinese to their own country. It is these invisible exports that are now chiefly resented by the Siamese, who feel that the Chinese are exhausting their country as if it were a gold mine, remaining in Siam only long enough to make a fortune, which they then repatriate along with themselves. The Chinese are the bridge over which all the profits of internal commerce are remitted to China, and almost none of the fruits of an increasingly favorable balance of trade remain at the disposal of the country of their origin.

#### *China's Relations with the Chinese in Siam*

The close relationship of the Chinese in Siam to the affairs of their fatherland has complicated Siam's relations with China and her administration of minority Asiatic groups within her frontiers.

After 1925, when southern China inaugurated a boycott against Hong Kong, the Chinese in Siam began to take more interest in home affairs and to support the anti-British movement. After 1927, when Chiang Kai-shek was fighting the communists in China, many refugees came to Siam, bringing with them their propaganda and a new element into Sino-Siamese relations. It was alleged at the time that ninety-seven Chinese schools in Siam were disseminating the principles of Sun Yat-sen, and this was the justification given by the Siamese Government for its increasingly strict supervision of Chinese education. The Siamese authorities even refused an offer by Chinese merchants to erect a hospital for sick Chinese immigrants at their own expense. In general, however, the Chinese avoided doing anything that would lead to deportation.

Tension at this time was further aggravated by a series of anti-Japanese boycotts, which began on an important scale in 1927 over the Tsinanfu incident. In contrast with previous boycotts, which had been spasmodic and short-lived, the Chinese organization was

this time so efficient that it affected Bangkok's commercial life seriously. Even the trade of European firms was considerably hampered. When Chinese coolies refused to handle cargo to or from Japan, Siamese labor had to be used; and the consequent dislocation resulted in endless delays in shipping.

The Siamese Government at first contented itself with protecting these substitute Siamese laborers; but when Chinese gunmen shot some of their fellow-countrymen on Bangkok's main thoroughfare, more drastic steps were taken. Investigation proved that these gunmen were members of the Blood and Iron Society, and that they had only recently come to Siam for the purpose of intimidating the Chinese there in regard to the Japanese boycott. At first such Chinese as had persisted despite warnings in trading in Japanese products had been circularized and mildly fined. But now the violence of these gunmen aroused Siamese officialdom. Active steps were taken against subversive secret societies; numbers of agitators were deported; and new regulations were passed restricting immigration.

By the end of October 1928 the anti-Japanese boycott was definitely broken. Secret societies still campaigned, but without disorders; contributions were collected, but no longer by force; and in general those merchants who did not want to support the boycott felt free to refuse. Coolies no longer struck when asked to unload Japanese cargoes, and Chinese merchants began to ship merchandise to Japan via their compatriots in Hong Kong. In a way this new method was more profitable because it eliminated control over rice exports, which until then had been exercised by Europeans through their banks. The upshot of the whole boycott was that the rich Chinese traders grew richer, and the poor coolies who were without work were still afraid to attempt it. The police's greatest handicap in this whole problem had been the passive attitude of the Chinese victims, who feared to give evidence. Japanese shipping took a little time to recover, since it could not be maintained without a return cargo and since incoming Japanese merchandise could still be disposed of only to Japanese and Indian retailers for distribution among the European population.

The depression and the immigration laws of the next four years resulted in an excess of emigration over immigration among the

Chinese. Not until March 1932, when the Chinese rioted in celebration of what they thought was a victory over the Japanese at Shanghai, did the police again have to intervene and forcibly disperse the crowd with firehoses.

Once more it was forcibly brought to Siamese attention how close were the ties between the Chinese in Siam and the homeland, and how truly transient and unassimilated they were. By the end of 1931 there was the additional factor of China's new tariff, which was making the balance of trade, heretofore favorable to Siam, now turn to the advantage of China. All this lay behind the new rigidity in Siam's education laws and the further tightening of immigration restrictions. This in turn led to the boycott of Siamese rice in Canton in 1933 and a bitter press campaign in China against Siam. Moreover, Siam's growing friendship with Japan, which has been the policy of the constitutional government, has added fuel to the flame of Chinese resentment.

### *Diplomatic Relations*

Before the declaration of the Republic, China approached Siam through Tokyo at different intervals with a view to establishing diplomatic relations. At one time a treaty was actually drafted, but Siam declared its terms unacceptable inasmuch as she was referred to as a vassal state of China. The Siamese gladly seized upon this objectionable reflection on their country's sovereignty, fearing that a duly accredited Chinese representative in Bangkok might organize the large numbers of Chinese in Siam into a body capable of making trouble for the Siamese Government. Again at the Versailles Peace Conference it was reported that the Chinese were urging diplomatic and consular representation at Bangkok, but nothing came of these efforts.

In 1926 Siam was again approached through the same Tokyo channels with an acceptable treaty draft, but she frankly replied that she preferred to await more stable conditions in China before negotiating. French Indo-China and the Straits Settlements had already permitted diplomatic representation of the Chinese, but Siam still wanted to put off the evil day as long as possible.

When the Kuomintang telegraphed its congratulations to the constitutional government in 1932, fresh overtures were made to

negotiate at least a commercial treaty, for which there was then a greater need than ever because of the new Chinese duties. But the new régime sustained its predecessor's policy and acted as though China's sole interest in her expatriated sons was the number of immigrants that Siam could absorb and the amount of money they could remit to the fatherland. In January 1933 visits between Siamese and Chinese officials were exchanged, but they produced nothing more than the usual expressions of friendship.

By this time, the psychological moment had passed. Siam's educational policy, the triumph of the conservative element among the revolutionaries, and the increasing turbulence of the Chinese in Siam, all contributed towards stiffening Siam's attitude in regard to a treaty with China. Moreover, the press, particularly in southern China, was creating ill-feeling by spreading inaccurate statements about the bad treatment of the Chinese in Siam. The Bangkok Government replied with perfect justice, if not with complete candor, that her immigration, educational, and fiscal policies were applied impartially to all foreigners. The Chinese Government came to realize that it had no legal case against Siam, and that the boycott of her rice harmed Chinese merchants in Siam as much as it did Siamese farmers. Thus no official action was taken, and an attempt was made by both sides to smooth matters over.

When seventeen members of the Siamese Assembly toured China in July 1935, they were approached by public organizations there urging the establishment of diplomatic relations and inquiring about the anti-Japanese movement in Siam. Upon their arrival at Canton, it was said that the party received the coolest reception ever extended to foreign visitors, and that no representatives of the government were at the station to meet them. An effort was made by the Siamese Government to counteract unfavorable press comments on the situation of the Chinese in Siam by appointing a Chinese adviser to the government on Chinese affairs. In November 1935 this adviser wrote a lengthy letter to the *Straits Times* correcting any misapprehensions that that paper might be laboring under in regard to the status of the Chinese in Siam.

A return visit by a Chinese Economic Mission left Shanghai in May 1936 to "interpret China to our Siamese friends."<sup>10</sup> China was anxious, they said, to find new trade outlets to offset the



smuggling then prevalent in north China. Great crowds welcomed the members of the mission upon their arrival at Bangkok, and they were subjected to the usual routine of official receptions. It was even arranged that an address should be made to them by a Chinese prisoner in a Siamese gaol telling them how well treated he was. Only one untoward incident occurred when the police arrested a Chinese who was petitioning the mission to make Siam remove restrictions on Chinese immigration and the use of Chinese in the school curriculum.

In an interview with the *Malay Tribune*, Dr. Ling Ping, head of the Chinese mission, said that he thought a commercial treaty with Siam might be negotiated in the near future; that his impressions of Siam were most favorable; and that the Chinese there were treated on a par with the Siamese themselves. A China-Siam Society was founded in Bangkok, and a replica was also proposed for Nanking. When the mission left Siam, its members donated Tcs. 1000 to the new University of Political and Moral Sciences.

Shortly afterwards the Siamese Government sent a commercial expert to China to report on a direct shipping service between the two countries. In April 1938 the Minister of Economic Affairs visited China to discover new outlets for Siamese trade there, and the following month a Chinese commissioner came to Bangkok to advise his nationals to obey Siamese laws and promote a better understanding with the Siamese people.

### *Trade Relations*

Before the revolution of 1932 it was generally thought that Siam's trade with China had been badly hit by the decline in silver; for Siam was then still a gold standard country. The slump in silver did, of course, affect the balance of Siamese trade with China. But its importance lay not in the fall of silver in relation to gold, but in the relation of the gold price to that of the commodities that made up China's trade; and that relative decline was comparatively small.<sup>20</sup> The price of Siam's rice was in any case very low, owing to world conditions. Moreover, China did not pay for her rice out of her silver reserves. She bought her imports by means of her exports, and it was more upon the quantity of the latter than on

the price of silver that her capacity to import depended. This was a crucial point that neither Siam nor China seemed to take into consideration when both countries raised their tariffs in 1930-31.

Until the end of 1931 Siam was importing more from China than she was exporting to her, and in that year China valued her imports from Siam at 4,863,000 Haikwan taels as against 4,145,000 in 1929. China's exports to Siam were 5,031,000 taels in 1931, as compared with 5,136,000 in 1929. But, of course, these sums represented only a part of China's economic interest in Siam. In that same year, as a result of the depression and Siam's fiscal measures, more Chinese were repatriated than remained in Siam; and the remittances to China declined accordingly.

At this time French Indo-China began to make headway at Siam's expense as a result of the finally negotiated Franco-Chinese treaty. Siam let it be known that she approved in principle of a similar trade agreement with China, but that she was not quite ready to negotiate it.<sup>21</sup> The Chinese Economic Mission of 1936 had as its three-fold program the expansion of the work of the Siamese Trade Commissioner at Hong Kong to include southern as well as central China; the establishment of a large Chinese bank in Siam, presumably to finance the rice export; and the extension of Siamo-Chinese shipping to central Chinese ports. At this time China was occupying third place in supplying Siam with imports, following the British Empire and Japan. Imports from China were valued at Tcs. 12,600,000 in 1934-35, which represented a gain of Tcs. 100,000 over the 1928-29 figures. China's imports from Siam, Tcs. 45,300,000, were second only to those of the British Empire, Tcs. 57,500,000; and the balance of trade favored Siam in both cases.

The recommendations of the mission were favorably considered, but circumstances have not been propitious to their adoption. In October 1937 the Trade Commissioner at Hong Kong had to be withdrawn—instead of having the scope of his activity extended—because of the virtual cessation of Siam's trade there owing to the Japanese blockade of Chinese ports and the embargo that China had placed on certain imports. The second of the mission's recommendations depended entirely on Chinese initiative, which has not been forthcoming. The third item on the agenda is the hardest of

all to carry out because of the necessity of finding adequate return cargoes. Trade is also hampered by the high freight rates between the two countries, which could be lowered if Siam would build a bigger merchant marine.

The outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 inevitably led to a renewal of the anti-Japanese boycott. However, no matter how patriotically the Chinese may reject Japanese goods, their price alone is within the purchasing power of the Siamese masses; and therefore any attempt at a permanent boycott is foredoomed to failure. Some of the secret societies have recognized this and permitted the registration and sale of stocks in hand. Japanese merchants claim, with apparent accuracy, that the boycott has affected their trade very little so far.

The new impetus given to Siamese nationalism in the last seven years has greatly affected Sino-Siamese relations. The young Siamese are particularly rabid against the hold that the Chinese have acquired over their country's economy; and the government by its labor bills, its increasing restriction of immigration, its recent deportation of five thousand opium addicts, and other repressive measures, has shown its continued determination to control the Chinese in Siam.

In the summer of 1939 there was a recrudescence of anti-Chinese measures taken by the government, which have continued until the present, though with less violence. More than thirty Chinese schools were closed down; all but one of the Chinese newspapers were suppressed; and hundreds of Chinese were deported, including opium addicts and others charged with distributing counterfeit notes and inciting their compatriots to hatred of the Siamese and to anti-Japanese boycott measures. The most sensational development was the arrest of three members of the Chinese Overseas Bank, who were British subjects. This step was not fully explained but was undoubtedly connected with the discovery that Tcs. 800,000 collected from Chinese merchants and secret societies had been deposited with them for remittance to China. Because these measures were not followed by the usual mitigating compromise, feeling ran so high that Chungking sent a diplomatic protest to the Siamese Government, demanding the protection of Chinese nationals in Siam. To this the Premier publicly replied that, lest

his "beloved" Chinese subjects should misunderstand, he wished to state again that there was no discrimination against the Chinese as such, but only against the lawless elements, who must be made to obey the laws. He added that he did not favor a treaty between the two countries.

Immigration regulations, which heretofore had not been effective in keeping out many Chinese immigrants, were stiffened. Arrests and deportations continued. However, the Chinese, both in China and Siam, have apparently accepted this policy of severe control over their schools, press, secret societies, and even their businesses.

#### JAPAN

Relations between Siam and Japan date back 346 years. In the late sixteenth century Siam was the strongest power in the Indo-Chinese peninsula; and the Japanese, then emerging from civil strife, were famous as mercenaries throughout the East. In 1593 the Siamese king had 500 Japanese soldiers in his army, and many of them had probably lived in the country for some time. European adventurers of this period reported the existence of a large Japanese colony at Ayuthia. It was probably through these expatriates that the Shogun Ieyasu learned of Siam's wealth and power; for in that year he asked the Siamese king for cannon and scented wood, in exchange for which he offered three suits of armor and ten long swords. This mixture of military-commercial factors was the basis of future relations between the two countries.

In the first part of the seventeenth century Japan's foreign commerce was conducted by means of a license system, through which the merchants of Kyoto and Nagasaki were granted, in the course of half a century, 1,827 permits to arm trading ships. These were called "ships of the red seal," and forty-two of them were allotted to the Siamese trade. Japanese horses and armor were particularly in demand; but *objets d'art*, fruit, and artificial flowers were also exported to Siam. In a curious reversal of the present exchange, Siam sent back textiles, hides, forest produce, and explosives.

Since the trade balance was favorable to Siam, the silver bullion with which Japan paid for her imports became important to Siam's economy; and its loss was keenly felt when Japan later closed her

country to foreign intercourse. The amicable tone of these early relations was fostered by an exchange of embassies in 1621, 1623, and 1626, which were sponsored principally by a remarkable Japanese adventurer in Siam, Yamada Nagamasa. Not only did he trade profitably on his account, but he exchanged letters with the Shogun and rose to such prominence in the Siamese king's favor that he was eventually assassinated by the jealous Siamese courtiers whom he had displaced. Yamada's rise to prosperity and power was almost as fabulous as that of Phaulkon.

Not all the Japanese who came to southeastern Asia at that time were peaceful traders or docile mercenaries. Japanese pirates infested the peninsular coasts, where they occasionally came to grips with Siamese junks—a curious forecast of the current trespassing in Siamese waters by Japanese fishermen. Japanese trade with the Siamese, both legal and illegal, was not confined to Ayuthia but also flourished at the peninsular ports of Ligor and Pattani. In 1605 some English traders lost their lives in a fight with Japanese pirates off Pattani, and a few years later the king of Cambodia complained to the Shogun about the piratical acts of Japanese traders in his kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Siam began to take a stronger stand; and when two Japanese junks tried to trade in Siam without a license, a fight ensued and eight Japanese were killed.

An anarchical element was also apparent in the Japanese colony at Ayuthia, which fomented several revolts. Because he thought that these Japanese had taken part in a conspiracy, King Songtam ordered the execution of some 280 of them. The Japanese at once rebelled, forced their way into the palace, and compelled the king to sign in his own blood an ignominious treaty giving them certain commercial and residential privileges. This agreement called for the surrender of four officials, who were promptly put to death because they had made themselves unpopular with the Japanese. Some Buddhist priests were also handed over to the rebels as security for the king's promises. The Japanese followed up their initial violence by pillaging Ayuthia and carrying away much of its treasure to Petchaburi, where their leader set himself up as an independent prince. Although Songtam was beset at the same time by an invasion from the northeast, he succeeded in driving the Japanese out of Petchaburi; but he allowed some of them

to remain in the kingdom, including Yamada and his bodyguard. He realized that there were many peaceable Japanese settlers in his country who had undoubtedly helped him to expel the lawless element among their compatriots.

Siamo-Japanese relations changed radically under the next king, Prasat Tong (1629-55). His succession was marked by great violence and was followed by years of political upheavals, in which two kings were executed, three crowned, and many princes and nobles murdered. Yamada and his bodyguard played an important role in these years, acquiring such authority as sometimes to hold the balance of power between the conflicting parties. The circumstances surrounding the violent death of Yamada are obscure; but after he and his son had been eliminated, their disappearance did not wholly allay the fears of Prasat Tong, who treacherously attacked the Japanese camp at Ayuthia in 1632. Many were massacred, and others escaped in boats to Cambodia after a fight at sea. By 1644 not a single Japanese was left in Siam.

It was largely as a result of this massacre that Siamo-Japanese trade collapsed. In the early seventeenth century it had outweighed in importance the combined trade of Siam with other foreign countries.<sup>28</sup> In 1633 there was a fleet of over 300 Japanese ships at Ayuthia, and it was against the Japanese that the Dutch competed most ardently for Siam's trade.

In 1633 the Dutch made notable efforts to oust Japanese competition, which was, however, more heavily capitalized than theirs. The Governor of Batavia ordered Schouten to

draw the king's attention to the irreverent expressions used by the Japanese Emperor towards His Majesty, to see all the influential Siamese and to turn them as much as possible against the Japanese, alluding to the unbearable insults and great nuisance the king suffers from them.<sup>24</sup>

Possibly Dutch instigation may have been partly responsible for the subsequent massacres.

Japanese imports from Siam included deerskins, gunpowder, camphor, European cloth, tin, teak, sugar, coconut oil, and lead. In return, Siam took horses, cotton cloth, lacquer, tea, porcelain, copper, and iron. In 1639 Japan was closed to foreign intercourse, with a slight exception in favor of the Dutch and Chinese; and it

was into the hands of the latter that the Siamese trade passed in a sporadic and unsustained fashion.

In 1612 the Siamese Government had appointed officials to act as supercargoes on ships trading with Japan, and these Siamese commissioners continued to handle the commerce even when China took over the carrying trade. After the massacres of Prasat Tong, the Japanese refused to let these Siamese land in Japan, even though they permitted Malay and Chinese crews to do so. The Siamese king found this humiliating, but even more regrettable did he find the shrunk trade profits and lack of silver bullion that had formerly come into his coffers from the Japanese trade. Accordingly, he tried to persuade the Japanese to return to Ayuthia and succeeded in luring about eighty of them back; he gave them land and special privileges and allowed them to elect their own leader. In vain, however, did he send an embassy to the Shogun to restore politico-commercial relations; his envoys were not even permitted to land. The attentive Dutch fell heir to Japan's trade at Ayuthia, and the breaking of their hold on his country's economy became Phra Narai's major preoccupation and the major motive behind his desire for a French alliance. Friendly relations between Siam and Japan were not resumed until 1887.

Siam's Foreign Minister, Prince Devawongse, visited Japan in 1889 to arrange a treaty of commerce between the two countries, which was significant in being the opening wedge in Siam's fight against extraterritoriality; and a Japanese legal adviser, T. Masao, was subsequently engaged by the Siamese Government to help Prince Rabi in preparing the legal codes. In spite of high anticipations, however, relations between the two countries underwent no notable development, largely owing to the lack of positive mutual interests.

The political rapprochement during the opening years of the twentieth century, which was fostered by the exchange of official visits, was also unaccompanied by any significant growth of trade. In 1902 Chulalongkorn imported some Japanese experts to help improve the quality of Siamese silk, but they could do little and left after a few years. In 1906 the N.Y.K. started a direct line of steamers between the two countries, but in that same year Japan's total exports to the countries of southeastern Asia amounted to only

4 per cent of her world total. Even as late as 1914 Japanese exports to Siam barely totaled ¥1,000,000, having risen from about ¥200,000 immediately after the Russo-Japanese war. It was only during and after the world war that Japanese commerce with Siam became active.

In spite of this insignificant showing, European nations began to be alarmed about Japan's relations with Siam, particularly after Russia's defeat; and the journalism of that period reveals a curious resemblance to the sensational articles written recently about Siam's rapprochement with Japan. In July 1906 the *British Trade Review* viewed with alarm the growing Japanese competition. It was rumored that Japanese officers would replace the Danes then in the Siamese navy; that Japanese tradesmen were coming to Siam on every boat; that Japanese doctors, mechanics, and spies (disguised as savants) honeycombed the provinces; and that Japanese were being taken into the administration.<sup>25</sup> As a matter of fact, aside from a few experts in sericulture and law, most of the Japanese in the country consisted of teachers of embroidery at the queen's school.

The French were also alarmed for the safety of Indo-China. One writer envisaged an alliance between Japan and the Anglo-Saxon powers to control the future of southeastern Asia—probably as a result of the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902. The same writer rashly asserted that Chulalongkorn took no important decision without the Mikado's consent; that a Japanese company had bought up important lands near the capital; and that, according to a journalist writing in the first number of the *Thoyo* organ of the Kokumin-Domei-Kdai, Japan had now become the accepted defender of Siam.<sup>26</sup> European officers who had been training the Siamese army were, it appeared, being replaced by Japanese; and the navy was slated for a similar transformation.

Japan's willingness to surrender her extraterritorial rights upon the completion of Siam's legal codes had certainly inspired the friendship of Siam. Her victory over Russia had also influenced Siam, in common with most Asiatic nations at that time, to regard Japan as leader among the Oriental nations. Prince Damrong in his preface to the Penal Code, written in 1908, paid this tribute to Japan:



Japan has been the first to succeed in doing what other Oriental nations have long been desiring to achieve.

Fortunately for Siam, the alarm inspired by her growing friendship with Japan gained for her more advantageous terms in her treaties with France in 1907 and with Great Britain in 1909.

However, the alarmists were given little immediate cause for further fright. The second treaty between Siam and Japan, signed in July 1914, did not materially alter the existing status. The most interesting of its clauses provided for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, and the abolition of extraterritoriality upon completion of the codes was again guaranteed.

Although the war of 1914-18 increased the trade between Siam and Japan, various negative factors still hindered its full development. Some dissatisfaction was expressed in Siam over the poor quality of the Japanese goods that flooded the country as a result of Europe's bellicose preoccupations. The anti-Japanese boycott, although frowned upon by the government, continued to be carried on by the Chinese and occasioned serious losses to Siam's trade. In 1919 a branch of the Bank of Taiwan was opened in Bangkok, but it was soon forced to close down. As ever, until the depression, economic relations between the two countries did not keep pace with the friendly feelings so frequently expressed by both governments. The 1920's passed in a pleasant exchange of visits between Siamese and Japanese Buddhists and Boy Scouts. A Siam Society, known as *Shamu Kyokai*, was founded in December 1927, with fourteen Japanese businessmen and officials as members, under the presidency of Prince Chichibu. But matters rested there. The Japanese had no economic concessions in Siam analogous to those acquired by the Western powers, and the vernacular press in 1928 expressed more alarm than enthusiasm over the reported sale of 450 acres of paddy land to a Japanese.

During the five or six years after the war, when the Western powers were unable to restore their pre-war commercial position in Siam, Japanese trade grew steadily but not sensationallly. It was handled almost exclusively by Chinese merchants. Japan operated two steamship services spasmodically between Bangkok and Kobe, but the bulk of Siamo-Japanese commerce passed through the port

of Hong Kong. This reliance upon the Chinese as middlemen explains why the Japanese colony in Siam suffered so severely from the Chinese boycott of 1928-29. The volume of Japan's trade with Siam in 1930, the year after the boycott was lifted, was still small compared with that of other countries and was overwhelmingly in Siam's favor. Exports to Siam totaled ¥9,476,000 and imports ¥18,843,000, not counting the larger transshipments through China. The principal articles shipped from Japan were cotton cloth and yarn, brushes, soap, electrical apparatus, metal products, and toys. From Siam came rice, teak, and other hard woods. From 1929 to 1932 about 85 per cent of all Japan's rice imports came from Siam, and rice made up almost the entirety of that country's exports to Japan. In 1931 Japan supplied 8.4 per cent of Siam's imports, and in 1933 the percentage rose to 19.4.

Although southeastern Asia had been acquiring an increasingly important place in Japan's economy, it was the depreciated yen in 1932 that provoked the extraordinary change in Siamo-Japanese trade relations. As Japan's exports were simultaneously making headway in India, the Netherlands Indies, and the Straits Settlements, the rise in Japan's cotton exports to Siam from Tcs. 2,800,000 to Tcs. 14,000,000 was not at the time regarded as especially significant. It was not until 1933, when Siam was the sole nation that abstained from voting to censure Japan's invasion of Manchuria—for which Japan was very vocal in her gratitude—that Siam's relations with Japan began to be interpreted as signifying a secret alliance, or at least very pro-Japanese sympathies. After that, everything Siam did took on an ominous meaning. Several journalists reported at this time that Japan had undertaken to come to Siam's assistance in case of foreign intervention, but this was resented by the Siamese as implying that they were unable to take care of themselves.

In March 1934 the sensational London *Daily Express* published a report that Japanese spies were thick in the Malay Peninsula and that the Bangkok Government would welcome the substitution of a Japanese for a British Financial Adviser, and even a Japanese alliance. This same report hinted that Japan was looking for a naval base to offset Singapore's reinforcement and that the site chosen was the Isthmus of Kra.

Simultaneously in Bangkok the greatest alarm was caused by rumors that war had already broken out between Great Britain and Japan. The Publicity Bureau thought this important enough to issue a denial—not only of the state of war, but of Siam's intention of engaging a Japanese financial expert, of digging a canal at Kra, or of making a Japanese alliance.

Nevertheless, scare rumors persisted. In June 1934 a Siamese Trade Commission visited Japan for a month; and in August a delegation of Japanese businessmen brought to Bangkok, among other cities, an exhibit of Japanese products. That same month Siam felt called upon to deny the rumor that she was going to appoint a trade commissioner to Japan. Impartial observers agreed that Japan should take advantage of trade opportunities and that it was only reasonable for Siam to cultivate friendly relations with Japan; but it looked as if in so doing Siam might become embroiled with the Western powers and possibly in either case lose her long-cherished independence. Much of the accumulated tension was revealed in a discussion of the Kra Canal that took place in the House of Commons in April 1934.

Despite constant reassurances of impartiality, it was hard to deny that Siam was being more and more drawn into the Japanese orbit. The possible effect of this development on the colossal strengthening of Singapore's naval base provoked lively fears in England. The press was not letting the British public forget that it was building a Gibraltar in the East; and it was suggested that Japan might find a reply to the Singapore base at Kra, whose Isthmus and adjacent shores form the only break in English territory between India and Singapore.

Sir John Simon, in answer to an interrogation on the Kra Canal, said that such rumors had been in circulation at various times in the past, but that there was no reason to think that the current rumor was better founded than the others. But the following November the question was again brought to the attention of the House of Commons. Captain Cunningham-Reid told the members that he had it on excellent authority that Japan had already supplied a certain sum towards the building of a canal at Kra. He maintained that, since Siam was still resentful over the loss of her control of so many Malayan States, she might easily become the catspaw of a

greater power with whom she had much in common. The foreign press did not trouble to circulate this new Parliamentary interest in Kra, but Bangkok's Publicity Bureau published Cunningham-Reid's statement in English. One of the big Bangkok dailies, the *Nation*, interviewed Yatabe, the Japanese Minister to Siam, on the subject. He denied that the Japanese were dreaming of such a project and said that his government had never approached Siam about it. If it were built, he saw no reason why it should interfere with Singapore; but since he was not a technician, he could give no valid judgment as to its feasibility.

This question of feasibility has been a moot point ever since the early days of the Kra controversy in the latter half of the nineteenth century; it has certainly been to Britain's interest to declare the scheme impracticable.<sup>27</sup> Only at Kra could a canal possibly be built since high mountains rise forty miles to the north. The rainfall around Kra is intensive but periodic, averaging 165 inches from May to October, when malaria is rampant. In the dry season the Pakchan River, which flows into the Indian Ocean at Kra, is not more than 30 feet wide or 3 feet deep. Any canal built there would have to be dug at sea level, as there is not enough water to operate a lock system at the time when it is most needed—the season of the heaviest rice shipments. Experts have not succeeded in finding any route shorter than twenty-four miles from Kra to the Gulf of Siam. Only once at high water, in 1864, did Colonel Fytche succeed in forcing a steamer up to Kra to meet the Siamese commissioner who was then working on the boundary demarcation.

The difference in water level between the two coasts of the peninsula was established years ago despite its denial by some contemporary writers. Tidal variations must also be considered; on the west coast they amount to about 30 feet as compared with 3 feet on the eastern side. Thus aside from the question of cost, a sea-level canal would be impossible; and the only alternative to it would be a series of locks operated by an enormous water reservoir near the summit, into which water would have to be pumped from the tidal portion of the Pakchan River.

The east coast presents other drawbacks. It consists of a sloping bed of solid rock for miles out to sea, through which a channel would have to be blasted. Strong coastal currents and semi-

typhoon weather in the Gulf for more than four months of the year would necessitate strong breakwater protection. Even so, the entrance and exit of the canal from this side would not be very easy; and since vessels might be delayed there for days, a special harbor would have to be constructed. All this would add to the colossal cost that canal dues could hardly be expected to defray.

The other and more basic consideration is the utility of such a canal, and this is a factor that has been rather inadequately studied by most writers on this perennially fascinating subject. The strategic value of a canal at Kra is dubious for any nation other than England, who controls the western egress. The last forty miles of the northern bank of the river lie in British territory; and Victoria Point, across from the mouth of the Pakchan estuary, is also British-owned. Numerous islands, which Britain could easily defend, lie scattered about near enough to the coast to control entry to the canal.

From the viewpoint of trade, the canal's utility to any single power, including Siam herself, is doubtful. Ships passing by Ceylon would have to extend their journey more than 300 miles north to sail by Kra, and then turn back south to avoid the shallow water and islands off Cambodia. Moreover, Singapore, 90 per cent of whose trade originates south of Penang, is a great trade objective in itself. More than half of Siam's exports are rice, bound for Hong Kong and Singapore; and the peninsula's rubber and tin find their market and manufacture in nearby Penang. Siam has little trade with her immediate neighbors to the east and to the west since their economies are so nearly identical that they have little produce to exchange. A light overland traffic is borne across the few caravan trails over the Burmese mountains, and the Mekong carries Siam's small legitimate and contraband exchanges with Indo-China. Siam's trade with Japan is now handled by seven ships plying between Bangkok and Japanese ports; and since the rest is transshipped at Hong Kong, in neither case would a canal at Kra be used. The only traffic that might justify the canal is cotton from India and rice from Burma to the Orient, with possible supplementary cargoes from Marseilles to Saigon. But in June 1937 the Indian Government reserved its coastal, including Burmese, shipping to British-registered vessels—an effective blow aimed at Japan's extensive

carrying trade. From another angle, the higher tariff that has resulted from the industrialization of India also cuts into Kra's potentialities.

The year 1935 was comparatively free from Kra alarms. Not until February 1936 was the Kra issue revived, when a detailed report appeared in European and Eastern papers that Japan was actively working on the canal. Eight hundred thousand Siamese coolies were said to be blasting rock at Victoria Point under the supervision of two hundred Japanese engineers. Siam again issued a denial, and even in the House of Commons it was pointed out that the project was generally undesirable, both economically and strategically. However, the Western press continued to report even the most commonplace aspects of Siamo-Japanese relations as ominous.

The next Kra scare originated in a reported interview with the Siamese Premier by E. O. Hauser, which appeared in the magazine *Asia* in February 1937. Phya Bahol, it appears, suggested that the Kra Isthmus be ceded by Siam to an international committee composed of the chief powers interested in shipping in that part of the world, who in return would guarantee the lasting neutrality of Siam. The Siamese Government issued a virtual denial, and Luang Pradit openly expressed his doubt whether the Premier had ever granted the interview at all.

In March 1938 the Rangoon Parliament was told that a canal was actually being built in the Kra area, which had been made into a military zone and was barred to foreigners. The acquisition of a peninsular mining concession by the Japanese the following July and the frequent reports of Japanese fishing fleets in Siamese waters have given rise to the most recent alarm. In spite of official and unofficial denials; in spite of the semi-annual reports that are almost the sole preoccupation of the English consul at Singora; and in spite of statements by qualified witnesses, notably by J. A. Mills of the Associated Press, that the story is a fabrication from beginning to end, the Kra Canal story is so inherently dramatic that it always gains a certain credence. So attractive a myth dies hard. Possibly a railroad may be built across Kra, and certainly roads are being built in the region; but none of these prosaic possibilities has the charm of the Kra Canal.

Siamo-Japanese relations are basically economic rather than political or cultural; but in one vital respect a truly close commercial rapprochement is handicapped. Reciprocity has been the keynote and the goal of modern Siam's foreign relations, and Japan's persistent refusal to import Siamese rice has prevented an adjustment of the present very unequal trade balance. Japan's imports from Siam amount to no more than between one and two million yen annually, and this includes a maximum of 10,000 tons of Siamese broken rice. When Japan's exports to Siam more than doubled between 1933 and 1935 to make up a fourth of the latter's total imports, there was no corresponding increase in Siamese exports to Japan. Moreover, the Siamese have now come to regard Japanese manufactures, which are the only ones they can afford, as necessities, although Japan's continued domination of Siam's import market has undermined friendly relations with other powers.

Just how far Siam has succumbed to the Japanese siren it is difficult to say. Both Siam and Japan have sincerely tried to redress the trade balance. In the spring of 1935 Siamese consulates were established at Kobe and Nagoya; a Japanese expert was engaged to promote cotton-growing in Siam with the ultimate goal of supplying the Japanese market; and Japan put two new and faster ships on the Bangkok run. In May a Siamese Economic Mission visited Japan but failed to achieve the anticipated effect of lifting Japan's ban on Siamese rice. Siamese officers were sent to train in Japan, and Siamese students generally were encouraged to go there. In March 1936 a Japanese Economic Mission of fourteen members came to survey Siam's natural resources with a view to their development by Japanese capital; and they virtually promised a market in Japan should the right crops be developed on an exportable scale.

This mission was generally recognized to have failed completely—a fact attributed by the Japanese to Siam's fear of offending Great Britain and France. Actually, however, an important reason for its failure was Japan's tactlessness. Patronizing articles appeared in the Japanese press at this time stressing Siam's potential usefulness to Japan as a stepping stone in her traditional southward drive. Siam, they said, could serve as an invaluable source of raw

materials, as a good market for Japanese manufactures, and as a field for Japanese capital. The two independent Buddhist peoples of Asia could develop through a Japanese Institute a cultural exchange in which Japan would lead her younger brother. It was only natural that Siam should be desirous of throwing off the hated yoke of her Western neighbors, and for this reason she should gladly turn to a real friend of the same race and religion.

The Siamese openly resented these implications of European domination and the disparagement of their ability to develop their country's resources unaided. Nor was Japan's attitude, as represented by her Manchurian policy, reassuring to her Asiatic brethren. Moreover, Siam was suspicious of the motives behind the proposed Japanese capital investment and had no desire to duplicate Anglo-French influence. In the early twentieth century she had refused similar German overtures; and she would certainly not grant to post-war Japan what she had denied to pre-war Germany, whose nationals had rendered her so many important services. Even Japan's cultural influence was not wholly welcomed; Bangkok was already overrun with Chinese hospitals and schools, which were raising serious problems of assimilation. The Siamese were no nation of imbeciles to be cajoled into bargains of immediate advantage for which future generations would have to pay. Siam's traditional policy of winning the friendship of her two powerful neighbors would be pointlessly sacrificed for so paltry a gain.

Nevertheless, to a certain, though not irrevocable, extent, Siam has accepted Japan's offers. She is willing to have her students and officers learn from Japan, despite the delay entailed in studying a language that has not the universal application of either English, French, or German. About two hundred Siamese students are now living in Japan, but approximately the same number have been sent to the Philippines. Siam will place orders for warships and locomotives with Japan as long as she underbids competitors; and she will continue to accept Japan's merchandise since it alone lies within her people's purchasing power.

But Siam has also placed naval orders in Italy; a Czechoslovakian firm built her new sugar factory; and a Danish company has received the contract for rebuilding Bangkok's port. In 1937 Siam refused Japan's projected extension of her Formosa airline to either



Bangkok or Chiangmai,<sup>28</sup> and no Siamese industries have been financed by Japanese capital although it has been repeatedly proffered. No important concessions have been made to the Japanese, with the exception of a tin mine recently acquired and a few hundred acres of cotton land on which it was specified that Siamese laborers be used. There is only one Japanese technician in the employ of the government, and the last Japanese officer served in the Siamese army two hundred years ago.

The treaty negotiated with Japan in 1937 was identical in almost every respect with those made with the other powers; in fact it was less advantageous than Great Britain's in that Japanese cannot own land outright in Siam because Siamese are not permitted to do so in Japan. Siam has no interest in any Pan-Asiatic League and certainly no desire to become involved in the Sino-Japanese war. The presence of half a million largely unassimilated Chinese in the country, as contrasted with six hundred Japanese residents, makes a Chinese victory potentially dangerous. On the other hand, a Japanese triumph might place Siam next on Tokyo's military timetable. In short, Japan has undoubtedly gained ground in Siam at England's expense; but the degree of this transition is not significant and is but a reflection of the shifting balance of power in the Far East.

In the political field, it may safely be said that Japan has overplayed her hand in Siam and scored almost no successes at all, despite the existence of a pro-Japanese element among the military group of officials. There has been some progress in the far safer cultural and religious spheres, but even here language is a serious barrier. Despite an over-weighted trade balance, Japan's triumph has been a commercial one—so overwhelmingly so that the Chinese boycott, held somewhat in check by the Siamese Government's insistence on neutrality, has not seriously affected the import of Japanese goods into Siam. On the other hand again, Japan had been consistently refused a permanent foothold in Siam's industrial expansion and in the development of her natural resources.

As a producer of raw materials and foodstuffs and as a strategic military base, Siam is a factor of no negligible importance in any conflict involving southeastern Asia. The Siamese have asserted, and will undoubtedly again reiterate, that they are not playing

favorites; but the world continues to be alarmed by the increase in Siam's military budgets and by her being drawn, as it appears, ever further into the Japanese orbit. The recent development of Singapore as a naval base has given Siam a new strategic importance, which may make of her the Belgium of the Far East. In any case, the retention of her good will has become a factor of major significance.

Although there is no such thing as Siamese public opinion, in so far as it does exist, Siam is not pro-Japanese, or pro-Chinese, though socially her relations are good with both peoples. She wants a lasting neutrality, a truly Washingtonian isolation, and a peace that will permit the development of her resources unaided by outside powers, who might later seek a pretext to interfere in her affairs.

#### INDIA

Indians began settling in ancient Siam in the early Christian era.<sup>20</sup> Most of them came by boat either directly from the mainland or from Java and settled in different parts of the country; others came by the overland routes from Assam and Burma. The first Indianized kingdom of the peninsula was Founan, one of the dependencies of which, Cambodia, rose to power at the end of the sixth century and absorbed its former suzerain. This amoeba-like process was continued when a vassal of Cambodia, the Thai state of Sukhothai, freed itself from the Khmers in the thirteenth century, but not before it had been impregnated with Indian religion, science, and writing.

The history of the successive waves of merchants and colonists making up the Indian colony in Siam preceded the independence of Sukhothai but did not reach so far back as the Indian colonization of Champa. A Tamil inscription of the eighth or ninth century shows the existence of an Indian corporation in Siam conducting a heavy trade with India, with sufficient profit to permit the building of a temple to Vishnu. The small separate Indian principalities that were formed all over the Indo-Chinese peninsula were not the result of any organized colonization on the part of either the Indian immigrants themselves or of the mother country. India seemed never to concern herself about the welfare of her expatriated children who carried her civilization to distant countries.

There is only a casual mention of them in her literature. Ceylon, however, maintained closer relations with Siam over several centuries through the exchange of religious missions.

In the thirteenth century Hinduism waned before the rising influence of Buddhism, which was brought to the peninsula by Asoka's missionaries along with Pali literature and Indian forms of architecture. Siva was dethroned by Buddha, yet the Brahmanic gods and ceremonies survived in a distorted form. In the seventeenth century travelers reported that the Siamese had in some of their temples a colossal statue of a negro—probably Vishnu, as the first teacher of their religion.<sup>80</sup> Descendants of the early Brahmins, called Phrams, now living in Siam, claim as ancestors the persecuted Brahmins of India, who fled first to Pegu and thence to Siam in the fifth and sixth centuries. They constitute nowadays a small community in Bangkok, probably numbering no more than eighty, who live together near the Wat Boh Phram. In the days of the absolute monarchy these Brahmins held a high position at court. They presided over the major ceremonies and acted as official astrologers and even as lay teachers in the Buddhist *wats*. Many Siamese festivals, such as the Topknot and Swing ceremonies, are Brahmanic in origin, though they now include a number of Buddhist practices.

In the seventeenth century Prasat Tong tried to find a substitute for Japanese and Dutch trade in Indian commerce. He massacred the Japanese and strove to break the Dutch monopoly by making trade treaties with the kings of the Coromandel coast and with the Nabob of Bengal. Every year embassies and minor gifts were exchanged, and both countries used their ambassadorial privileges to bring cargoes into the country duty-free. The relationship thus built up was wholly commercial and in no wise political. Prasat Tong was disappointed, however, in the profits therefrom and began to impose restrictions on the Indian trade, with the result that it flourished even less than before and soon practically disappeared.

In the same century, Siam's relations with India became complicated by her growing intercourse with Europeans. Under Phra Narai a desultory trade war was started with the king of Golconda, in which English adventurers participated impartially on both sides

as ship captains. During the hostilities, certain of the English installed in the Indian trading posts seized some Siamese ships, with the result that relations between the king of Siam and the English East India Company became very strained. French influence rose at the Siamese Court in proportion as the prestige of the English sank. Since the nineteenth century the history of Siam-Indian relations has merged with that of Anglo-Siamese relations.

The Indian community in Siam now numbers about 100,000, and is very amorphous in character.<sup>31</sup> The majority are merchants; some are in the Bangkok police force; and a small number are unskilled laborers. Others are miscellaneously employed in such capacities as watchmen and messenger boys. At first they proved to be a difficult group to administer. In 1899 the Pathans of Bangkok emulated the Chinese secret societies by featuring a fight between two rival clans. Many of them were dissatisfied at that time by the way in which the British consular court was handling Indian cases. The language barrier was the root of the trouble; about two-thirds of the merchants at that time were Tamils, and the other third spoke Hindustani—both language groups keeping their accounts and their lives in watertight compartments. Linguistic misunderstandings were also the cause of their friction with the Siamese authorities; and in any case the Siamese, who were not used to their mode of thinking, found it hard to deal with the Indians or to establish a basis of mutual confidence.

In 1933 India began to concern herself with the fate of her sons living under foreign governments. A Madras publicist, Dr. Lanka Sundaram, who visited Siam early in the year, issued a statement supporting certain allegations of ill-treatment of Indian laborers in Siam. When this appeared in the newspapers of Malaya and India, a report on the question was advocated. It was at the request of the Government of India that K. A. Mukenden, the Indian Agent in Malaya, proceeded to Bangkok to investigate conditions in regard to the employment of unskilled Indian labor there. After ten days he reported his surprise at learning that the Indian community in Siam had serious problems to face. During the preceding five years 9,067 Indian immigrants had arrived, and there were 6,121 departures for the same period. Unlike those who came to Malaya, the majority of Indian immigrants in Siam were not

unskilled laborers. Out of the 1,834 arrivals in 1931 only 33 were coolies, and the great majority entered commerce.

The Indians in Siam are regarded as transients in the country. They have made enough money and have regarded themselves as sufficiently stable, however, to build a Sikh temple in 1933 at the cost of Tcs. 80,000. In 1930 an Indian Association of Siam was founded, and six years later the Indian community was regarded as sufficiently important to receive overtures from the Japanese.<sup>82</sup> On the whole, Indians are regarded as not very desirable immigrants but their number is so small that they constitute no real problem.

#### GREAT BRITAIN

Three years after the defeat of the Spanish Armada, two English merchants, Lancaster and Raymond, sailed for the East to break the Portuguese monopoly. The following year Lancaster landed at Penang after capturing some Portuguese ships, but his victory proved to be moral rather than immediately profitable. It was but one of a series of blows that loosened the Portuguese hold on the sea routes to the Indies at the end of the sixteenth century. Both the English and the Dutch were well received in the East because they were enemies of the Portuguese, whose violence had aroused the greatest hostility there.

At the turn of the seventeenth century Lancaster again set sail, this time in the employ of the new-born English East India Company; and in spite of Portuguese opposition, he traded at Acheen, where he made a treaty with its king, and opened a trading post at Bantam, where the Dutch had been established for some years. This site appealed to Europeans because of the local pepper trade and because it was also a centre for spices from the Moluccas.

During this period the Dutch were fighting the Portuguese for the domination of southeastern Asia. Malacca was taken in 1641, and from this time on Dutch power grew phenomenally in Malaysia, with the result that the English were left with only remnants of the spice trade. By the end of the seventeenth century the Dutch had driven the English out of Java and left them concentrated in Sumatra and the Irrawaddi valley, where they had found the Portuguese also installed when they began to trade there in

1618. From their trading posts in Ava and Pegu, the English tried to extend their commerce to Chiengmai, but the incessant hostilities in that region made trade there impracticable.

The early seventeenth century witnessed a more successful attempt on the part of the English traders on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula. In 1612 the first British ship, the *Globe*, anchored off Pattani, bringing among its merchant-passengers Peter Floris, who wrote the history of this voyage.<sup>88</sup> The *Globe* had picked up a cargo of cloth at Masulipatam and called at Bantam, where it found Dutch competition hopelessly obstructionist. It therefore pressed on to make the first English voyage down the Straits of Malacca, past Singapore, to Pattani, where it was hoped to establish a flourishing entrepôt for the silk trade with China and Japan. However, the Pattani factory proved a failure, lasting a bare decade.

At this time no Japanese vessels could enter Chinese ports, and a solitary Portuguese ship, carrying Nanking and Canton silk, plied annually between Macao and Japan. The rest of the trade was conducted at neutral ports in Formosa and the Philippines, and to a certain extent in Siam, where both the English and Dutch hoped to share in this lucrative business. The Dutch were the more successful since they managed to lure the silk traders directly to their Singora factory. The English were left to find Pattani pepper of poor quality and trade there generally unprofitable. The queen of Pattani charged high duties and preferred exchange operations to trade. Her officials demanded heavy bribes, and there were minor risks in the form of frequent robberies and fire. Having only intermittent cash replenishments from home, Floris turned to the trade in skins and gum benjamin as a more dependable export than silk; but the following year he had not made enough money to buy food. In Pattani, as everywhere else at this time, the privileged companies had to contend with interlopers; and their own agents often participated in such illicit operations.

After the *Globe* had left Floris to found a factory at Pattani, it sailed on to Ayuthia; and the six merchants who landed there were probably the first Englishmen to reach the Siamese capital. They brought with them a letter from James I to the king, who received them well despite Dutch machinations.

Nevertheless, the English factory proved unprofitable and was closed down in 1623; but in a few years trade with Siam was again resumed. The Siamese king was in a very strong position because he could play the Portuguese, English, and Dutch off against one another; but their rivalry was sometimes so bitter that the Siamese unexpectedly found themselves involved. The Dutch worked up such a case against the Portuguese that relations between the latter and the king became strained to the point of mutual seizures of ships. But the Portuguese retaliated, and the ensuing disputes between the Dutch and the Siamese resulted in the closing down of the Dutch factory in 1627. It was reopened in 1640, but friction between the king and the Dutch continued and paved the way for the reopening of the English factory in 1662. This, in turn, led indirectly to the Siamo-Dutch treaty of 1664, in which extraterritoriality made its debut in Siam's foreign relations.

A second contributing factor in the reopening of the English factory at Ayuthia was the precipitate arrival of some of the English factors from their company's Cambodia post. When the Annamites overran that country in 1659—the same year that Phaulkon appeared on the Siamese scene—the English who escaped to Ayuthia were so well received by Phra Narai that they advocated reopening the factory there. The king forgave the company an old debt, which had long embittered his relations with the English, and generally made overtures to them with a view to offsetting the privileges that the Dutch had wrested from him in their treaties of 1664 and 1668.<sup>84</sup> But the English were not quick to take advantage of these overtures. The local agents became embroiled with Phaulkon, then obviously the reigning power, whom they tactlessly blamed for the burning of their factory at Ayuthia. The agents who were sent by the Madras Council to straighten out this misunderstanding were greeted upon their arrival by the sight of two French men-of-war; their mission was ignored, and they themselves were eclipsed by the magnificence of Louis XIV's first embassy. In 1684, however, Phra Narai signed a treaty with the English king giving his company certain trade monopolies, of which they had but very transient enjoyment.

French prestige rose as England's sank, especially after the outbreak of hostilities between Siam and the king of Golconda. Dur-

ing that prolonged and desultory war, in which English sea captains served on both sides, the English company was blamed for the seizure of certain Siamese ships. In spite of James II's reluctance to go to war with Siam lest it involve him in hostilities with France, the company was determined to get rid of Phaulkon, whom they regarded as the source of all their troubles.

To this end the English company secretly decided to take Mergui, seize as many Siamese ships there as they could, and arrest every Englishman then in the Siamese service. Mergui at this time was under an English Governor, who had formerly been chief agent for the company at Ayuthia; and his port officer was another Englishman named Samuel White, the brother of Phaulkon's former patron.<sup>35</sup> James II's resistance had been sufficiently worn down for the company to get from him a letter ordering White and all the other English interlopers to leave the king of Siam's service and to hand Mergui over to the company's agents; and a letter was sent to Phra Narai threatening the capture of Mergui and of the Siamese ships there if the company's claims for damages were not satisfied. A forty-day truce was declared in order to give time for a reply to come from Ayuthia, and in the meantime the Siamese not unnaturally prepared to defend Mergui fort against a possible English attack. The English captain, to show his disapproval of these measures, took over the Siamese ships in port there; and in the ensuing unsavory struggle almost all of the fifty Englishmen then at Mergui were murdered. The king proceeded to declare war on the English company in August 1687, but he was anxious that it should not assume serious proportions. The Englishmen not connected with the company who stayed on in Siam were well treated and free to trade, which they did throughout the long period in which Phra Narai carried on a vague and indefinite war with the English company.

This English war merged into the Phaulkon-French episode that culminated in 1688, and was liquidated with it. Thirty-six Englishmen were released from prison in the general amnesty declared on Pitraya's accession. The new king was content with having eradicated foreign political influence and confirmed the Dutch in their tin and hide monopolies. In 1690 the English President of Fort St. George wrote Pitraya a friendly letter congratulating him on his



accession; but he reiterated the company's claim to £65,000 damages. The following year the company made further overtures, which proved equally vain; and relations with Siam lapsed thereafter for more than a century.

### *Eighteenth Century*

The overthrow of Phra Narai in 1688 precipitated a series of revolts that lasted for the whole of the eighteenth century. A treaty was actually made with England in 1718, but it was found that Siam was still too poor to be productive of profitable trade. Moreover, the English were preoccupied with their nascent empire in India, although they periodically manifested an interest in the Malay Peninsula.

Great Britain's renewed interest in Siam rose chiefly from her encroachments in the Malay Peninsula, where the East India Company was still anxious to forestall the further extension of Dutch power. In 1782 the moment was considered propitious to accept the offer of the Sultan of Kedah of a strip of coastal land and its adjacent island, which became Province Wellesley and Penang, in return for an annual payment and the unwritten assumption that he would receive English assistance in his perennial struggles with the king of Siam. Prolonged misunderstandings of serious consequence arose from so ambiguous an agreement. The Supreme Council in India denied any pledge of assistance to the Sultan against Siam and forbade the Penang Council to intervene other than diplomatically in Kedah's struggle with its suzerain. The company's policy at this time was never to interfere in the internal affairs of the Malay chieftains. Strangely enough, Siam did not then or later seriously contest Kedah's right to cede a portion of its territory to the British. The whole question rested in the academic sphere from 1786 to 1819, when it entered the realm of practical politics.

### *Nineteenth Century*

In 1818 Siam forced the Sultan of Kedah to conquer Perak, which subsequently sent its formal submission to Bangkok in the form of the tributary *bunga mas*. This campaign, however, made the Sultan of Kedah increasingly recalcitrant against obeying Siam's

demands for men and money, and more inclined than ever to intrigue with Burma. When this became known, he was summoned to Bangkok to answer for his conduct; and his refusal to obey provoked a Siamese invasion of his lands that was speedy and ferocious. Many Malays from Kedah sought refuge in Province Wellesley, and their Sultan fled to Penang; in both places they swelled the number of those already vociferously demanding reprisals against the Siamese.

Penang thus found itself in a delicate position. On the one hand the Raja of Ligor was demanding the surrender of his vassal with veiled threats; and on the other hand the Sultan was clamoring for the aid against Siam to which he felt he was entitled according to the terms of Penang's cession. Both demands were refused.

Thereupon the Sultan of Kedah turned to Burma, who was enchanted with the idea of wresting a vassal State from her ancient enemy. But Penang was hard to please and preferred Siam to Burma as a close neighbor; moreover, the Sultan's intrigues had been carried on while he was enjoying British protection. The upshot of these complications was that Penang sent full information of the plot to the Raja of Ligor, with the result that Siam was only the more embittered against the rebellious Sultan and no more grateful to the British than before. The Siamese felt that the English had acquired Penang unfairly while Siam was engaged in a war with Burma; and that they had encouraged the Sultan of Kedah to rebel and then protected him against his rightful punishment.

Shortly afterwards the English colony established at Singapore in 1821 decided to enter into direct commercial relations with Siam; and to give them a clearly non-political flavor, an English merchant named John Morgan was selected as envoy. He was firmly instructed to act solely in his own name and in no way to commit the government or the company. He was received by Phraklang and the future Nang Klao, who were known to have very deep-rooted suspicions about Europeans. Siam at this time was preparing for another war with Burma, and her rulers wished to ascertain whether or not the English would remain neutral. Morgan said at once that he could not answer for his government and retired within his mercantile shell. Nevertheless, he was given

permission to trade; but as it was found that he interfered with the Chinese and Portuguese already established there, his permit was soon withdrawn, especially after he had used it to import opium, which was forbidden. On his return to Singapore he reported that, in his opinion, trade with Siam could be carried on only through treaty arrangements. However, he agreed with the majority of his compatriots that it would be unwise to establish an English factory or consulate at Bangkok at that time lest it lead to entangling complications.<sup>80</sup>

The restoration of the Sultan of Kedah was not the chief factor influencing the English Company in their decision to send a mission to Siam in 1821. Economic motives predominated.<sup>81</sup> The Penang Council feared, and with good reason, that the conquest of Kedah would throttle Penang's food supply, especially after an attempt to make the island self-supporting had failed. Although the Kedah Government had sometimes been "forward and troublesome," it had always been "kindly disposed and easy to deal with."

The second more important motive behind the mission was the desire to revise Siam's hampering trade regulations. In the three years following 1817, when Penang had begun to trade with Siam, commerce had grown 39 per cent and was valued at \$ (Straits) 207,750. The principal export from Siam was sugar, and her chief imports were opium and cotton cloth from India. Moreover, Penang had an even more important commerce in tin with the Siamese dependencies of Perak, Pattani, and Puket. Between 1818 and 1819, at the time when Penang was fulminating against the invasion of Kedah, its council was urging the Government of India to pave the way for a revision of trading conditions with Bangkok. Simultaneously with the dispatch of Morgan's unofficial mission, the Supreme Council designated as its envoy to Siam and Cochin-China John Crawford, a member of the medical service, who had a special knowledge of Malaya.

Crawford was assigned thirty sepoy as escort and two English companions. Dr. Finlayson, the surgeon and botanist of the group, wrote an informative diary of his Siamese visit; and with a surveyor, Lieutenant Dangerfield, he was charged with gathering as many data as possible about this practically unknown land. Crawford was instructed to dispel, in the interests of British trade, the distrust

and fear of Europeans that existed in Further India. To this end he was to

refrain carefully from demanding or hinting at any of those adventitious aids or privileges upon which earlier traders of Europe founded their expectations of commercial benefits, like the establishment of forts, factories, exemption from municipal jurisdiction and customary imports, the monopoly of favorite articles of commerce, and the exclusion of rival European nations.<sup>88</sup>

The second obstacle that Crawford had to overcome was one common to all nations bearing the stamp of Chinese civilization—a contempt for foreign traffic in general, which made them impose vexatious restrictions on all traders. He had to try to standardize commercial imposts, even at a high rate, rather than allow trade to continue at the mercy of avaricious and capricious officials. In all Crawford's instructions, the commercial angle was stressed at the expense of the political owing to the Supreme Council's reluctance to conclude formal treaties or to give offense to the Dutch in any way.

The Siamese were puzzled as to why negotiations were carried on by the English company and not by the English king. Siam's one great fear at this time, in all her dealings with Europeans, was that they would insist on following their own customs to the detriment of hers. Cavilling over details of royal audiences was unending. The envoys had to part with their firearms and interpreters before being admitted to the audience hall, where they had a hard time threading their way to the royal loge since every inch of the floor was covered with prostrate courtiers carefully ranged in hierarchical order. The Siamese had arranged the whole ceremony so that Crawford and his companions had to make more than the usual number of obeisances, and their gifts were represented as tribute. The American envoy, Roberts, wrote of the repercussions of this whole episode a decade later:

. . . Mr. Crawford, to effect his purpose, in which he totally failed, complied with their insulting demands. The Siamese amuse themselves with talking upon this subject even now and say that the gentlemen belonging to the mission were obliged to walk ankle-deep in mud and water; that some of them lost their shoes, they being taken away pur-

posely by the Siamese servants, of course, by order of their masters. Once or twice, the subject was named to me, and I severely reproved them for their disgraceful conduct. Major Burney, it seems on a more recent mission, agreed to comply with the demand of taking off his shoes, but on the condition that he keep on his hat; they, however, preferred he should keep on his shoes and take off his hat.<sup>39</sup>

During the negotiations there were constant delays, procrastinations, repeated interviews, and skirmishes about the official letters. At Crawford's royal audience the Governor-General's letter was neither displayed nor read, as had been promised; and when the answer was sent, Crawford had to fight to get a reply from the king himself and not from the Phraklang, which would have put the latter on a parity with the Governor-General.

The suspicion of the Siamese Court was such that the envoys were refused permission to visit Ayuthia lest they should see too much of the country. They were even prevented from seeing the Portuguese consul, or the Cochin-Chinese envoys, who arrived at Bangkok at the same time. Finlayson went so far as to say that the mission was kept prisoner from contacts with the people by this "mean, suspicious, and weak" government.<sup>40</sup> Crawford had unwittingly offended the Siamese by using a former slave as interpreter—and this was but one of many points of mutual misunderstanding.

The Phraklang, in an informal interview preceding the royal audience, revealed that his primary concern was to purchase fire-arms freely at British ports—thus immediately supplying the keynote to Siamese interest in the negotiations. Siam was willing to give England every trade facility provided she could count on a regular supply of arms, which Crawford did not feel himself authorized to promise since at this time the British wanted to remain on friendly terms with the Burmese. He therefore stipulated that such arms as the British might supply must not be used against the Burmese—a condition that naturally led to an impasse.

As regards the extradition of the Sultan of Kedah, Crawford avoided the subject as long as he could. When he was forced to mention it, by offering his services as mediator, the Siamese simply enumerated the Sultan's sins of omission and commission and insisted that he come to Bangkok to submit his cause to the

king in person. Siam was certainly aware of the faulty English title to Penang, but she probably preferred to make no objection that she could not sustain by force of arms. The only concession Crawford was able to win—and one with which the Government of India was well pleased—was a reference to Penang as an English possession.<sup>41</sup> The Siamese Government also conceded the remission of the annual payment of \$10,000 for Penang and Province Wellesley.

The Siamese Court was quite as reluctant as the Supreme Council to enter into specific agreements. In regard to trade, they offered a reduction of duty from 8 per cent to 6 per cent, provided that at least five English ships came to Siam each year. Crawford constantly dwelt on the favorable treatment that the Siamese had received in English ports,<sup>42</sup> and this was in no way denied. Nothing could be said against his proposals except that they ran counter to usage and that the king could not grant to foreigners liberties and privileges that he denied to his own people. In reality, the treaty proposed by Crawford undermined the vested interests of the Chinese and Indian Muslims at court and also the faction headed by Nang Klao and the Raja of Ligor.

The net result of these negotiations was that Crawford obtained a written promise that the amount of Siamese duties would not be increased and that in future British merchants would enjoy the Phraklang's benevolence—whatever that might be. Crawford was a painstaking and careful diplomat rather than a brilliant one. His proposals for fixed duties were too sweeping an innovation, especially as he had nothing to offer in return. But he acquired much valuable information, not the least important being an appreciation of Siamese character and strength, which both the Penang and Indian Governments had greatly overestimated. Siam impressed Crawford most favorably as a field for commerce, despite widespread official corruption; property was secure, and taxation, though unregulated, was not excessive. In spite of his failure to achieve his immediate objectives, Crawford's visit did result in increased trade between Siam and the British Empire; and two years later an English merchant, Robert Hunter, established himself at Bangkok and laid the foundations of modern trade in Siam.

*The Burney Mission*

Two years after Crawford had left, the first Anglo-Burmese War broke out; and the Supreme Council urged Penang to approach Siam as a possible ally, especially in the early stages of the war when the English troops were making little headway. The hostility that Penang continued to feel towards Siam did not facilitate negotiations; nevertheless, Lieutenant Low was sent to Ligor to persuade the Raja to dispatch a Siamese contingent against Burma. In its immediate objective, this mission was a failure; but Low acquired the very useful information that the Raja of Ligor was no semi-independent prince—a delusion under which Penang had been laboring—but merely a very powerful Siamese official, who was unable to detail forces under his command without Bangkok's consent. However, by the time this was learned, the English no longer needed Siamese aid. Siam took no serious part in this war although she was nominally an ally and was included in the peace of February 24, 1826, whereby Great Britain acquired Tenasserim, Tavoy, Martaban, and Arakan.

In 1824, the year of Siam's expansion in Selangor and Perak, a new and aggressive Governor, Robert Fullerton, arrived in Malaya. In a dispatch sent to the Supreme Council almost immediately upon his arrival, he outlined his future Malayan policy. This modest program included the restoration of the Sultan of Kedah, and the forced renunciation of Siamese claims to sovereignty over the Malay States south of Kedah and Pattani on the ground that a Siamese conquest of these places would destroy British trade with the peninsula. In its reply, the Supreme Council hesitated to sanction any attempt to make a formal treaty with Siam lest the latter, by breaking its agreement, might compel the company to resort to force of arms. Nevertheless, in view of Siam's conquest of Kedah in 1821 and the increasing importance of Siamese trade, the Supreme Council regretfully decided to abandon its principle of no political treaties and to advocate the reconstruction of Kedah as an independent buffer State under the ex-Sultan.

Although Fullerton's suggestion that the company become protector to the Malay States fell not only on fallow but on resisting ground, he nevertheless prepared to keep Siam out of Selangor and

Perak at any cost. A not wholly accurate report in May 1825 that the Raja of Ligor was collecting a fleet of three hundred galleys with which to attack Selangor and possibly Penang gave Fullerton an opening of which he was quick to take advantage. Relying on the Raja's ignorance of his real orders, Fullerton threatened him with war unless he gave up his expansionist plans; and to give body to his bluff, he sent a fleet to simulate a blockade of the mouth of the Trang River. The ruse was successful; the Raja was intimidated, and his galleys remained in port.

In 1825 Captain Henry Burney, one of the two officials in Penang who spoke Siamese, was named envoy to Bangkok to ascertain Siam's attitude towards the Burmese war and the British conquests resulting therefrom; he was also instructed to attempt to negotiate a commercial treaty with Siam. He had previously been dispatched by both the Indian and Penang Governments on successful missions to Kedah and Ligor; the ability he had shown on those occasions had commended him to Calcutta, and his anti-Siamese sentiments had won Fullerton's approval.

Burney confirmed Low's appraisal of the status of the Raja of Ligor and the necessity for dealing directly with the timid and suspicious Government at Bangkok if the Penang Council still intended to restore the Sultan of Kedah. But he succeeded in persuading the Raja to give up the idea of attacking Selangor in a preliminary treaty, which, if approved by the Government of India, was to serve as the basis for negotiations with the Siamese Court.

The Raja promised to send no troops to Perak and to adjust the quarrel between Ligor and Selangor. He also stated that he would not oppose the reinstatement of the Sultan of Kedah provided that Bangkok would accept his triennial tribute. Mutual assistance was to be given in negotiating a commercial treaty with Bangkok and also in the suppression of piracy. Burney defended his departure from the company's non-intervention policy on the ground that it was no longer advantageous and that its maintenance would lead to a worse evil, namely, the overrunning of the peninsula by Siam and the destruction of British trade there.

Fullerton was enthusiastic over this treaty and quickly consolidated its advantages by settling Selangor's local disputes, notably by persuading Perak to relinquish any claim to its suzerainty. The



Supreme Council ratified both Burney's and Fullerton's arrangements, and as an afterthought appointed Burney to negotiate at Bangkok the reinstatement of the Sultan of Kedah and the independence of the other Malay States. Since it seemed doubtful whether Burney would be more successful than Crawford, he was sent ostensibly to congratulate Nang Klao on his accession and to dispel any fears as to Siam's own safety that she might have conceived as the result of Burma's downfall.

Burney entertained the same unfavorable impression of Siamese character and government that Crawford had received, but he was forearmed with greater knowledge of conditions at Bangkok and also enjoyed enhanced prestige at the Siamese Court as a result of Britain's recent victory over Burma. The involved and curious wording of the treaty negotiated by him arose from his desire to remove as far as possible the still deep-rooted suspicions of the Siamese. The terms were first drawn up in the Siamese language and then translated literally into English. Apropos the difficulties involved, Burney wrote:

I do not wish my worst enemy a more difficult task than to negotiate matters connected with the Malay Peninsula without authority or the means for employing effective intimidation.<sup>43</sup>

Burney could only hint at a war that he was not allowed to threaten, but he was supported by the Raja of Ligor in matters not affecting the latter's immediate interests. Among these, however, the restoration of the Sultan of Kedah was not included, since this would have meant a financial loss to the Raja. Thus, despite his previous agreement with Burney, the Raja worked secretly against him in this matter. It was apparently Burney's growing and, in their opinion, misplaced confidence in the Raja of Ligor that led Penang's Councillors later to denounce him so bitterly as pro-Siamese.

The most ambiguous of all the complicated clauses in the Burney Treaty were those relating to the status of Trengganu and Kelantan. The Sultans of these two states had always resisted Siam's periodic requisitions of money and supplies, contending that the only legitimate demand that Bangkok could make upon them was the triennial dispatch of the *bunga mas*. In this attitude, which

dated back to 1786, the Sultans were supported, needless to say, by such imperialist-minded Englishmen of Malaya as Raffles, Swettenham, Cavenaugh, and Fullerton. Too weak for open defiance, these two states made repeated overtures for an alliance to the English company, which was as usual non-committal, particularly as the exact status of these two Sultans was so anomalous. In his treaty Burney succeeded in avoiding any admission of Siamese suzerainty over these States, and the *bunga mas* that they continued to send was labeled as a token of "respect, friendship, and awe." The essence of the vague agreement was embodied in the weird language of Article XII:

Siam shall not go and obstruct or interrupt commerce in the States of Trengganu and Kelantan. English merchants shall have trade and intercourse in future with the same facility and freedom as they have heretofore had. The English shall not go and molest, attack or disturb those States upon any pretense whatsoever.

The Kedah and Perak negotiations were no less difficult, but no claim to sovereignty over Selangor was made. Siam finally agreed to keep hands off Perak; and the company made a reciprocal promise, adding that Selangor would not be permitted to attack Perak. Its Sultan was to govern his state as he pleased and was to send the *bunga mas* to Bangkok only if he cared to do so. No objection was raised to the sending of diplomatic missions to Perak by either Siam or Ligor, provided that they did not exceed fifty men. But Burney could not make the Siamese withdraw their garrison from Kedah or restore the ex-Sultan. Furthermore, the English promised not to take over Kedah or to let its former Sultan reside in certain places in the British domains. They even guaranteed to aid Siam in preventing his restoration to the throne of Kedah.

As might be imagined, this last provision produced the most violent objections in Penang, where the Council was equally dissatisfied with the undefined status of Kelantan and Trengganu. Nor did Fullerton think much more of Burney's trade agreement. Henceforth British merchants were to pay only customary duties and could trade freely in Siam without official opposition—concessions that the Penang Council considered totally useless. So

severely was Burney attacked for this treaty upon his return from Bangkok in 1826 that he was challenged to a duel by a Penang official.

The Supreme Council, however, was more appreciative of Burney's efforts under very trying circumstances and appointed him Commissioner at Tenasserim and later Resident at the Burmese Court. Back in London in 1841, he became apologist for the company's Kedah policy; and in gratitude the company shaped its future program for that state according to his recommendations.

### *The Anglo-Siamese Struggle for the Peninsula*

Perak's independence from Ligor was established soon after the Burney Treaty was signed. To stop the continued intrigues of the Raja of Ligor with the pro-Siamese faction at the court of Perak, Fullerton dispatched Captain Low and some sepoys to support the pro-English Sultan and to prevent his being forced into demanding Siamese suzerainty. Low boldly exceeded his instructions, much to Fullerton's delight and to the Supreme Council's horror. He persuaded the Sultan to oust the pro-Siamese group, including the heir-apparent, and confirmed the commercial privileges of the company negotiated in a previous treaty. He also promised the company's aid if Ligor troops should force their way into Perak.

Although Low's treaty with Perak was never formally ratified, yet in 1844, 1853, and 1874, on the occasions when its Sultan appealed to the company on the basis of this agreement, its provisions were upheld. Moreover, it had the immediate effect of discouraging Siam's further expansion to the west, though not along the eastern coast of the peninsula.

The most troublesome application of the Burney Treaty proved to be its provision that the company would aid Siam in preventing the Sultan of Kedah from regaining his throne. This recalcitrant prince refused to change his residence and intrigued with Kedah exiles in Penang, who in the meantime had been joined by some professional pirates. In 1831, 1836, and 1838, the English had to assist the Siamese in restoring their authority in Kedah; and they grew increasingly impatient at having to bolster Bangkok's adminis-

tration, especially when their sympathies and interests lay with the rebel Malays.

However, since the Sultan was also becoming discouraged, the English were able to persuade him in 1839 to send his submission to Bangkok and to beg for reinstatement. This gesture came at a propitious time, as the Raja of Ligor had just died; and in 1842 the Sultan received back the greater portion of his kingdom. However, as a disciplinary measure and in order to lessen his authority, Bangkok cut off a slice of his territory and gave it to another Malay ruler not subject to the Sultan's control. At this the Sultan's old rebelliousness cropped out once more, and he sought compensation at Perak's expense. This brought the English down on him, and in 1848 he finally came to terms. Thereafter, until 1909, Kedah remained a Siamese dependency.

On the east coast, as on the west, Siam's southward push was stalemated by local English action. Kelantan, the weaker and nearer of the two eastern sultanates, was admittedly within the Siamese orbit; but the British disputed Siam's suzerainty over Trengganu, and also her encroachments in Pahang. Long-standing trading difficulties and court intrigues, which masked the major issues, came to a head during a dispute over the Pahang succession in 1862. Trade suffered so severely in the ensuing civil war, in which the Siamese and English supported rival candidates, that the British merchants of Singapore finally persuaded Governor Cavenaugh to take active steps. A complication was added to the already involved situation when the Siamese deposed the Sultan of Trengganu, who had refused to acknowledge his vassalage except by sending the *bunga mas*. In his place the Siamese put the Sultan of Lingga, whom the Dutch had deposed years before because of his intrigues in the south.

★ Learning that both the Sultan of Lingga and Siam's Pahang candidate were to be sent together to Trengganu, the British consul at Bangkok, at Singapore's request, asked the Siamese Government for the meaning of this move. He was informed that the Sultan's trip had no political significance but arose simply from a desire to visit his aged mother there, and that for so pious a purpose the king of Siam had lent him a warship.

Using Trengganu as a base, the candidate for Pahang's throne

launched a series of attacks on his rival, who continued to be supported by the British. As this state of affairs seriously hurt Singapore's growing trade with Pahang, Cavanaugh was supported by the Government of India in refusing to admit Siamese rights over that state and in asking Bangkok to remove the new Sultan of Trengganu, whose right to interfere in Pahang had no legal justification. The Siamese acquiesced but took no immediate steps to carry out their promise, trusting that the monsoon, which was then changing, would make it impossible for ships to land on the east coast. However, a British warship was sent to Trengganu and precipitated matters by bombarding that port after a twenty-four hour ultimatum. This gesture failed in its immediate objective—that of capturing the new Sultan, who fled to the interior. But he was eventually deposed by Bangkok in March 1863 and no longer troubled the peninsular peace. Cavanaugh's bellicose policy was condemned in the House of Commons but received most enthusiastic local approval.

In each of the Malayan States that eventually came under British control, the same theme was played with variations. Siam's covert encroachments, based on a historical claim to suzerainty that was enforced in proportion to proximity, were opposed by the British—but not officially. British interference grew out of the insistence of local merchants that their growing trade in the Malay States should not be ruined either by internal disorders or by a more forceful Siamese administration. The Malayan Governors at first tried to reconcile the orders of non-intervention that they received from the Supreme Council with the demands of local commerce. But the pressure of circumstances arising from the spread of Siamese and British influence over the same areas was such that, in order to avoid hostilities, they were forced to threaten war against a government that was more timid and suspicious than it was really powerful. In 1821 it had seemed inevitable that the weak and anarchical Malay States would fall under Siamese control; but the local British administration had succeeded, by alternating diplomacy with force, in staving off this eventuality. Success won the Supreme Council's approval; and the whole policy was justified by calling Siam's encroachments a menace to Malaya, in the sincere if naïve

conviction that the British were benefiting these countries by assuming their administration.

### *The Brooke Mission*

The Siamese trade proved to be nothing like so lucrative as had been anticipated after the Burney Treaty, and the British merchants who thought it capable of further extension petitioned ardently for another and more effective treaty. They maintained that Nang Klao had violated the freedom of trade that he had promised for all categories except rice exports. In 1840 he had established a partial monopoly over sugar, which was made complete two years later when he seized a British ship laden with sugar cargo. Moreover, the teak trade, carried on by British subjects until 1841, was suddenly forbidden. An oppressive and unjust commercial situation had arisen from the farming out of the monopolies; the sale price of commodities was up by 40 per cent, and Anglo-Siamese trade had been reduced to one-tenth of its former dimensions.

Although Nang Klao had no desire to throw open his country to Western trade, he wanted to remain on good terms with the British. He had successfully remained neutral during the Second Burmese War; and the victories that the British had won there, and later in China, made him loosen his grip to some extent on the sugar trade. But soon new restrictions were imposed, designed to throw all commerce into the not disinterested hands of the king's Ministers. A heavy measurement duty was placed on English ships to force them to use the king's merchant fleet, whose vessels were unseaworthy and overrun by white ants. As this was also the period of Siam's more open penetration of the peninsula, the British decided to pursue a more active policy at Bangkok.

Sir James Brooke was chosen to head the new mission because of his special knowledge of the East. But critical rumors of his past two unsuccessful years in Borneo preceded him to Bangkok. On his arrival at Paknam he had to ask the government's assistance in floating one of his ships that had got stuck on the bar, and to this the Raja later attributed his diplomatic failure. Much more important was the fact that the letters he brought were two years out of date and were signed only by Lord Palmerston. The suspicious

Siamese were greatly concerned to know whether or not they were dealing with an accredited official. The chief points in the treaty proposed by Brooke were: first and most important, a reduction in the measurement duties and in the tariff on non-monopoly articles; second, the legalization of residence of foreigners in Siam; and third, permission to export rice and import opium.

The conduct of the first British merchant in Siam, Robert Hunter, was used as an excuse to refuse free residence to foreigners. Hunter had come to Bangkok in 1828, after long experience in the Malay Archipelago, bringing to the king a very acceptable gift of a thousand muskets, which won him the right to live and trade in Bangkok. He served unofficially as British consul, entertaining the Europeans who visited Bangkok at this time and presenting them to the king. Native commerce was then so completely in the hands of the Chinese that Hunter realized that the only profitable business was to be transacted with the Siamese Court. He enjoyed the king's favor for so many years that he grew tactless in his days of prosperity. Like Morgan, he illegally imported opium for resale to the Chinese; and on one occasion he sold a motor boat, which Nang Klao had refused to buy, to the Annamites, who were then at war with Siam. The Siamese not unnaturally regarded this as a treacherous return for their hospitality.

The Siamese were even more unyielding on the main issue of reducing the measurement duties. There was some fear in Bangkok that war with England might follow this refusal. But Nang Klao, who had been too ill to deal in person with Brooke, died most opportunely; and negotiations were resumed with his open-minded successor, King Mongkut, by Sir John Bowring.

### *The Bowring Treaty of 1855-56*

Unlike his predecessors, Bowring liked and respected the Siamese with whom he dealt. Although he did not minimize the obstacles that Crawford, Burney, and Brooke had encountered, he appreciated that

my success involved a total revolution in all the financial machinery of the Government—that it must bring about a total change in the

whole system of taxation, that it took a large proportion of the existing sources of revenue, that it uprooted a great number of privileges and monopolies that had not only been long established but were held by the most influential nobles and highest functionaries in the State.<sup>44</sup>

Both the British and American envoys who preceded Bowring had impressed upon their respective governments that it was useless to negotiate further in a conciliatory spirit, but that warlike demonstrations, if not the actual use of force, were absolutely necessary to bring the Siamese to reason. When Bowring arrived, he learned that the two parties that had caused the previous negotiations to founder were still in existence, but that the liberal party was now in the ascendant. Bowring's path was also smoothed by the fact that his credentials were signed by Queen Victoria, whereas Crawford's letters had been signed only by the East India Company and those of Brooke by the Foreign Secretary. However, the Siamese greatly feared that the Annamites would attribute the signing of the new treaty to fear of the English; and the hardest point of all to carry was the establishment of a British consul at Bangkok. Mongkut feared that he would be unable to control him and that he might be a violent and uneducated man in whom he would have no confidence. Bowring soothed him by promising to appoint only wise and worthy men.

The earlier treaties between Great Britain and Siam had in no way infringed upon Siam's fiscal or judicial sovereignty. The juridical aspect of the Bowring treaty was perhaps the most important, but its revenue implications were almost as far-reaching. Formerly, merchants were allowed, theoretically, to trade freely in all Siamese ports but were permitted to live only in Bangkok; and they paid customary duties on all imports with the exception of opium, which was forbidden. Bowring now put opium on the free list, with bullion and personal effects; and a limitation of 3 per cent *ad valorem* was placed on all other imports. Exports were to be subject to duties according to the schedule attached to the treaty. Also regulated were the taxes on land held by British subjects, and it was further laid down that "no additional charge of any kind may be imposed upon a British subject unless it obtains the sanction of both the supreme Siamese authorities and the British consul." Not until the treaty of 1909 was this restriction on land



taxation abolished by a provision imposing on British subjects the same rates of taxation as on the Siamese themselves.

The years following the Bowring Treaty were marked by the rise of British influence. Mongkut was distinctly Anglophile, both from personal inclination and from a realization that British power was becoming dominant in the Far East. His son and successor, Chulalongkorn, shared his convictions and tastes and strongly advocated an alliance with Britain. But this was at first considered by Britain to be too aggressive a step, especially in view of the current peninsular complications.

Chulalongkorn took principally Englishmen as his advisers; and this naturally aided the growth of British economic interests even though the country moved towards modernization haltingly and inefficiently. In 1884 British shipping in Bangkok, then the only international port, constituted 61 per cent of the whole; and by 1898 it had risen to 78 per cent. The bulk of the country's exports were handled by the British ports of Singapore and Hong Kong. Industrially as well as commercially, Great Britain held first place, particularly in the teak industry. In the teak forests of the north the British Bombay-Burma Corporation acquired extensive leases, and the influx of British-Asiatic foresters made the north virtually a sphere of British influence. The rupee circulated there as legal tender, and the tical was scarcely known. The British were in charge of most of the foreign business firms in Bangkok and had the largest capital investment in the country. The stake was not large enough to be of vital concern to Britain, but it was important enough for her to want to keep the Siamese market and to oppose French annexation.

### *The Franco-British Controversy*

What became known as the Siamese Question assumed tangible form about 1884 when the French conquest of Tonkin and the British annexation of northern Burma brought France and Britain face to face in their search for access to southern China. As both countries began moving towards a focal point of penetration, Britain began to fear for Siam's fate. Holt Hallett, in a report submitted to the Foreign Office in April 1885, urged Great Britain to declare a protectorate over all Siam except Laos, which could be

generously left to the French. But the British Government preferred the policy of Satow, then Minister in Bangkok, which was to strengthen Siam against a possible French attack. This possibility, however, seemed to be increasingly remote when Ferry's Government fell that same year and the French perforce abandoned their interests in Mandalay. Moreover, the prolonged pacification of Tonkin seemed to put French aggression, at least temporarily, out of the question.

In September Waddington, the French ambassador to London, suggested to Lord Salisbury that it might be desirable to arrange a division of influence in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Salisbury replied that a mutual agreement binding both powers not to acquire Siamese territory might be appropriate, but nothing further was done at the time, since both powers were busy consolidating their recent conquests. The fact that Great Britain wanted to expand in the Malay Peninsula counterbalanced her desire to see a strong independent Siam in the central and northeastern area, where France was most likely to penetrate.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century both powers became more aggressive. In 1890 the British occupied the independent State of Kengtung on the upper Mekong and two years later secured Siam's consent to a boundary settlement whereby Great Britain got control of a region east of the Salwin River, abandoning the State of Kengtung on condition that Siam should never cede it to a third power. She also discreetly encouraged Siam to resist French encroachments in Laos, where the explorer Auguste Pavie was then at work. This was productive of several frontier incidents, but Lord Salisbury was no more willing now to come to an open settlement of the upper Mekong problem than he had been two years earlier when he had rebuffed Waddington's proposition. The shortsightedness of the policy of ignoring French interests in the north was revealed clearly by the incidents of 1893.

During April and May 1893 the Siamese, relying on British support, actively resisted French penetration of the Mekong valley. Still the British tacitly refused to interest themselves officially in the middle Mekong region. By June, however, British merchants in Bangkok had become so nervous over rumors that a French fleet

had been dispatched to Siam that they appealed to their government to intervene for the protection of their interests. The French Foreign Minister, Develle, was ominously reticent about France's intentions.

On June 29 the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs announced in Parliament that probably two more gunboats would be sent to join the one already stationed at Bangkok. Meanwhile, the commander of the French ships, ignoring Siamese protests and Develle's orders, forced his way up the Menam to Bangkok. By then public opinion in both England and France was fully aroused; Lord Rosebery was vigorously criticized for his inaction, and Develle was accused of being too moderate.

On July 20 when Pavie's ultimatum was not fully accepted, a pacific blockade was established, which hurt the Siamese very little but British trade a great deal. Great Britain naturally exerted pressure, in vain, to modify the French demands and later was more successful in urging Siam to accept the ultimatum. This was done on July 29, but by then supplementary French demands had been presented. However, the crisis finally passed with the signing of the agreement of October 3, in which France agreed to the creation of a buffer state on the upper Mekong.

Englishmen then in Siam were painfully aware that the whole incident represented, among other things, a diplomatic triumph for France over England, which cost the British a temporary loss of prestige. The Siamese resented the fact that Great Britain, after encouraging them to oppose France, had backed down when it looked as though war might be imminent. The Siamese imbroglio has been regarded by many in both Britain and France as the most significant crisis in Anglo-French relations prior to Fashoda.<sup>45</sup> Robert Morant, long experienced in Siamese affairs, told Sir Maurice de Bunsen, who was about to sail for Bangkok as *chargé d'affaires*, that he doubted his finding an independent Siam when he got out there. The London *Times* dispatched Dr. Morrison to Bangkok to write up the conflict that it was thought would break out between England and France over Siam, but upon his arrival he was bewildered to find that there was no longer a Siamese Question.<sup>46</sup> The British and French Foreign Offices were absorbed for the next two years by more pressing matters in Europe, and in

Siam they set about strengthening their respective positions in the upper Mekong.

In June 1895 Lord Salisbury began the negotiations that culminated in the Anglo-French Agreement of 1896 guaranteeing the neutrality of the Menam basin. By implication the remainder of the country was divided into spheres of British and French influence, but Salisbury insisted that the agreement in no way affected these areas. Nevertheless, on April 6, 1897, Great Britain got Siam to sign a treaty promising not to cede any territory or to grant any concessions in the Malay Peninsula south of Bangtapan to a third power.

In acting as though the Menam valley were Siam, Lord Salisbury made a very clever move, though at that time it was denounced by indignant British journalists as "the surrender of Siam." Such a superficial criticism came from merely glancing at the map, without appreciating the importance of this region, which contained five times more population than all the rest of the country. Ninety per cent of the total value of Siamese trade at this time was in British hands; and seven-eighths of this—roughly valued at £4.5 million—was thereby permanently secured, while a larger but barren and unpopulated region was by implication surrendered to France. The only advantage that France temporarily won from this arrangement was the abandonment by Great Britain of the trans-Mekong part of Chiengkeng and the establishment of the Mekong as the frontier. Salisbury could do nothing to make the French surrender Chantabun or to modify in any way the 1893 agreement.

Siam, surprisingly enough, gained morally by this physical loss of a large portion of her realm; she achieved a more compact and homogeneous country and one that was guaranteed by the mutual jealousy of her two powerful neighbors. Before 1896 an atmosphere of despair had permeated Bangkok, where the imminent loss of independence rendered every constructive effort apparently futile. Not that the danger had been wholly averted in 1896. For many years there was a feeling that the powers—especially France—might not let the agreement stand, since the control of the rich Menam valley seemed the only way of making the then onerous colony of Indo-China pay. In England it was felt that Lord Salis-

bury had sacrificed Burma's rights in the disputed north as a result of his fear, which was shared by the Government of India, of having a great European power as a neighbor. The work of the Buffer State Commission on the upper Mekong aroused debates in both Houses of Parliament and press comments of unbelievable length and violence. But with time, the Fashoda crisis and preoccupation with Russia and South Africa erased Siam from British minds until only a languid memory remained. Moreover, by 1904 the whole Siamese situation had radically changed.

The most important new factor from the British viewpoint was a whole-hearted desire to expand in the Malay States. Conscious that her authority there was being undermined, Siam tried to strengthen her hold on this region by a courageous administrative reorganization. Siam's "mismanagement" of these states was much flaunted in the Straits papers in a series of aggressive articles lasting over a period of years. The deposition of the Raja of Pattani and the issue of a new silver coin for Kelantan were protested by the British as illegal. This campaign was finally successful to the point of getting Chulalongkorn to appoint British advisers to Kedah and Kelantan, where internal disorders had been played up ever since British capital had received important concessions there. Despite denials by the powers concerned, which were based on the fact that in this agreement Kelantan and Trengganu had been acknowledged as dependencies of Siam, these appointments seemed to mark a step towards what was then generally regarded as inevitable—the incorporation of these states into British Malaya. The complacent righteousness with which such a step was envisaged was well summed up by the *Fortnightly Review*:

The incursion of the Siamese into the policies of the Malay Peninsula has been disastrous and disgraceful to themselves and has been fraught with all manner of evil consequences to the natives of the northern States. . . . The general opinion in Great Britain is that intervention is necessary. . . . Our own administration of a large Malayan population in the Federated States has been eminently successful . . . by a Government at once just, firm, and unselfish. . . .<sup>47</sup>

A wholly new factor had by this time entered into British consciousness and increased their eagerness for a revision of the

Siamese *status quo*. Germany had become a very serious competitor in the Bangkok market and in Siamese shipping. French ambitions at least had been entirely political, and this new menace put France's opposition in a wholly new light. Fear of German influence, at first in the economic and later in the administrative sphere, continued until the world war destroyed this menace.

The completion of the Korat-Bangkok Railroad also refocused the Siamese Question from the viewpoints of both Saigon and Bangkok. It put the Siamese capital at the mercy of a surprise attack that would give France easy control of the Menam valley and gave the latter an immense strategic advantage in case of a Franco-British war. Thus the rôles of Britain and France were now reversed. The former was anxious to come to an agreement with Siam, and the latter preferred to avoid finality in her arrangements with Bangkok. However, England's alliance of 1902 with Japan made France lean towards an understanding with Great Britain. Although England formally protested against the proposals made by Delcassé to the Siamese Government in 1902, those that followed in 1904 went unprotested even though they were far less advantageous to Siam. This seeming inconsistency can be traced to the Entente Cordiale of April 8, 1904, which finally liquidated the Franco-British controversy over Siam. Both powers were free thereafter to come to terms separately with Bangkok.

### *The Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909*

Britain's sapping of Siamese authority in the peninsular states, known as empire-building by persuasion, was conducted along several lines. One point of attack was Siam's unpopularity with the Malays. It was true that Siam had changed her old policy of *laissez-faire* to one of greater centralization, in which local revenues were not equitably dispensed by Bangkok; and that the introduction of increasing surveillance from Bangkok was resented by the Malay princes. But the Malayan press so consistently misrepresented conditions in peninsular Siam that the English adviser to Kelantan, W. A. Graham, felt compelled to protest in the *Straits Times* against the various articles written by a "viciously disposed person" discrediting the Government of Kelantan.<sup>48</sup> To this protest the *Pinang Gazette* replied that the sole merit, if any, of

Siamese administration must be attributed to its foreign advisers. Current journalism was a barometer reflecting the discovery of new peninsular mines and the ensuing scramble for concessions. The disputes arising from the famous Duff Syndicate of 1901 in Kelantan were particularly productive of the old complaints that the Siamese Government was deliberately hindering foreigners from acquiring a foothold there. After the French treaty of 1907 the British imperialists' demands for a share in the spoils reached a new crescendo.

The negotiation of the treaty of 1909 was a long and delicate task. Although discussions began in 1904, the treaty did not become a reality until five years later when Siam transferred to Great Britain her sovereign rights over Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis—an area of about 20,000 square miles.

For a long time it had been generally expected that these states, which had never become an integral part of Siam, were destined to come under British control. Yet when they changed hands, even the *Bangkok Times* thought that Siam might be paying too high a price for the abolition of extraterritoriality. Given time and security as to the future, Siam undoubtedly could have brought these states into line with the rest of the country. But the British were far-sighted enough to realize this and therefore pressed for an immediate settlement. Moreover, the Siamese knew that the only way to save the northern peninsular states—Pattani, Trang, and Puket—which were also beginning to feel British pressure, was to arrest any further expansion by a coming to terms with Great Britain. A secret written agreement attached to the treaty of 1909 gave Siam a free hand in the peninsular states left under her control, except in the matter of granting military bases to a third power. This "concession" was of more practical value to Siam than all the rest of the treaty, including the breach it made in Britain's extraterritorial rights and the final establishment of Siam's financial dependence on London—both important factors in her future foreign policy.

With the treaty of 1909, Anglo-Siamese relations entered a new and prolonged period of smooth sailing, which remained undisturbed until Siam's change to a constitutional régime. Siam joined the war on the side of the Allies; and in the post-war period Britain

regained her dominant position in Siamese economy and her influence in the administration, which the Germans had threatened. Moreover, in spite of all the sensationalism and nervous tension that has resulted from the establishment of the constitutional régime, Britain has maintained her lead among foreign nations in Siam; but she appreciates that the retention of her strong position depends upon the preservation of the *status quo*, which is threatened from within by the aggressive nationalism of the Assembly and the press, and from without by Japanese economic penetration.

The Siamese Government has kept its promise made immediately after the revolution to respect foreign properties and to maintain stable finances. Until the second world war the British Empire still held first place with control of 37 per cent of Siam's total foreign trade, as against Japan's 11.6 per cent; and in shipping Britain held second place—behind Norway. Although it is impossible to obtain detailed statistics, British capital represents by far the largest foreign investment in the country, dominating the teak industry and controlling a large share in the tin and rubber trades. Almost the entire public debt of Siam has been floated in London; and more than Tcs. 20,000,000 of the Tcs. 30,169,853 redemption fund of the Siamese Government has been deposited with London banks, and the rest invested in sterling bonds. Finally, Siam has adhered to the sterling bloc with only transient inconstancy, and the large part of her currency reserve is in sterling securities and notes. Three out of the six foreign banks are British, and so is the Financial Adviser.

The protection of so important an investment and of so dominant a position in Siam has been the source of much nervous irritability on the part of Britain. The virulent criticisms of the Malayan press in particular have evoked official Siamese protests and effective counterblasts in the Siamese vernacular papers. However, olive branches have been extended by both governments to counteract these mutual press attacks. In April 1934 the Siamese consul at Singapore assured the Malayan public that there was no anti-British feeling among Siamese officials; and this conciliatory gesture has been followed by an exchange of military and goodwill embassies, in all of which particularly soothing work has been done by the popular British Minister, Sir Josiah Crosby. On the



announcement of Siam's five-year naval program Great Britain appointed a naval attaché to the Bangkok legation, and Siam proceeded to buy airplanes from Great Britain. Until the collapse of France, both England and Siam wanted to maintain the political *status quo*; and this common interest, perhaps more than any other factor, seemed most likely to ensure the cordiality of their future relations.

#### FRANCE

In 1528 Jean and Raoul Parmentier sailed from France to Sumatra, thereby becoming the first Europeans to break through the Portuguese monopoly of the Indies route. But theirs was an isolated success, and for many years it was the English and the Dutch who consistently widened the breach they had made and who enjoyed the profits therefrom. Although the first French East India Company was founded shortly after its rivals, it was some time before it became effective in the East; thus it was left to the French missionaries to pioneer for their country in southeastern Asia.

#### *The French Mission to Siam*

Until the late seventeenth century all Catholic missions in the East were under Portuguese control. Most of the missionaries were either Portuguese or Spanish; they were chiefly Jesuits, but there were also Dominicans at Ayuthia. However, about the time that Phra Narai came to the Siamese throne, the expulsion of the Christians from Japan and the Catholics from Malacca concentrated France's attention on her expanding mission fields in the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

In 1652 a remarkable French Jesuit, Père Alexandre de Rhodes, pleaded with the Pope for aid in his mission work. The Pope authorized him to enroll missionaries, which he did exclusively from among his fellow-countrymen. The most notable of these missionaries was François Pallu, who became Père Alexandre's successor. In 1659 Pallu was consecrated Bishop of Heliopolis and Apostolic Vicar of Tonkin, and his work was backed by the French Société des Missions Étrangères. Rome and the Jesuits would have preferred a more international mission; but as it was

wholly financed in France, the enterprise inevitably took on a Gallic character.<sup>49</sup>

The missionaries sailed from Marseilles in 1660 and reached Mergui two years later, where they lodged with a Portuguese Jesuit. Their objective was not Siam but China and Indo-China; however, a violent persecution prevented them from going there at this time. Accordingly, three of them, led by Monsignor Lambert de la Motte, determined to press on at least to Ayuthia, where they arrived in August 1662 and found two Portuguese and one Spanish priest ministering to a Christian community of about two thousand.<sup>50</sup> The first missionaries to come to Siam had been two Dominicans from Malacca in 1555, but they had been killed shortly afterwards. More Dominicans came after them, followed by Franciscans and Jesuits. This last Order had been installed at Ayuthia since 1609; and when the French arrived, they made up more than half of the missionaries there.

The spiritual status of this little congregation, which was largely composed of half-castes, was judged to be poor by the new arrivals, who were tactless enough to say so, thereby increasing national antipathies. By the time the French missionaries had mastered Portuguese, which was the medium of communication with their flock and later with the Siamese Government, they realized that orders had been sent from Lisbon via Goa to prevent French missionaries—if necessary by force—from preaching or having their authority recognized in Siam.

The religious administration of Portugal, which placed the western part of the Indo-Chinese peninsula under St. Thomé, near Madras, and the eastern region, including Siam, under Malacca, was never recognized by Rome and was not mentioned in the instructions given to Lambert. Accordingly he refused to obey the summons issued by the Portuguese to appear before their church tribunal, and he wrote to the Archbishop of Manila and to the Jesuit generals at Batavia and Macao repeating his papal instructions and asking for their protection. This move increased the Portuguese hostility to such an extent that the French had to leave their camp at Ayuthia and seek refuge with the Protestant Dutch, whose hatred of the Portuguese was stronger than their dislike of Catholicism. Eventually the French moved over to the Japanese

and Annamite Camps, and Lambert wrote to Rome of their painful predicament. His offer to resign as a means of easing the situation was refused in 1665, and he was granted the extension of powers he had requested for jurisdiction over Cambodia, Pegu, and Annam.

Siam at this time was a cosmopolitan centre, and the tolerance of Phra Narai was both extraordinary and contagious. As the missionaries seemed to be indefinitely side-tracked in Ayuthia on account of the persecutions further east, Siam seemed like a good centre from which to radiate evangelical activity. By the end of 1663 the mission could boast of 150 new Catholics, organized into two parishes, for which a school and an oratory were built. The next year Pallu, co-founder of the Missions Étrangères with Lambert de la Motte, arrived in Ayuthia and soon made his presence felt. After studying the country's problems, the two pioneer missionaries embodied the result of their deliberations in a book of instructions, known as *Monita ad Missionarios*, printed in 1669 with Rome's approval. They also organized the administrative side of the mission and founded a seminary in which to train the native clergy.

Rome not only sustained the French Vicars vis-à-vis the Portuguese but also increased their powers in 1664 and again in 1669. In 1674 the General of the Jesuit Order commanded his followers in Siam to recognize the authority of the Apostolic Vicars, with the result that a truce ensued between the French and Portuguese. When Pallu, on his third visit to Siam in 1682, imposed the test of the famous oath of obedience that the Pope ordered his vicars to administer to every priest in their diocese, there were still some Portuguese who resisted placing themselves under the French Bishop of Ayuthia.

### *The Mission's Relations with the King*

In 1664 Phra Narai, whose interest had been stirred by the charitable work of the missionaries, ordered a court official to visit the mission centre. The king then summoned them to Lopburi for an informal visit, thus greatly enhancing the mission's prestige in the eyes of the Siamese. He questioned the bishop about the power of France and asked him if he thought Christianity was better than

Buddhism. The bishop, feeling that it would be tactless to be too trenchant in his reply, dwelt only on the virtues of Christ. The king was sufficiently impressed to send ten small boys to the mission school to be taught European sciences. The bishop naturally seized this opportunity to ask permission to establish a college "to teach what was necessary for a country to make it respected among the nations of the earth"; and to avoid arousing suspicion, he added that the missionaries "were not going to mix into state affairs or temporal things."<sup>51</sup> His request was granted; land was given him near the Annamite Camp, and materials were promised for building a church and compound to be named for St. Joseph.

In 1667 the king again sent for Bishop Lambert; and though the latter was unsuccessful in curing a paralyzed prince, Phra Narai continued to show interest in the mission and even to accept pictures of the life of Christ, remarking that Catholicism was a fine religion, but then so was his too. In addition to their building activities, the missionaries set themselves cultural tasks, such as the writing of a dictionary, a grammar, and the lives of the saints in Siamese. In 1672 they installed a printing press. Visitation of the sick and of prisoners was continued, the dying were baptized, and a very few converts were made. Most of the missionaries' zeal was concentrated on the seminary and on the Christians they had found in Ayuthia on their arrival. The Siamese remained indifferent to high-pressure evangelization; they were willing to accept mission charity, but with surprise and curiosity rather than with gratitude or admiration.

Phra Narai himself was attracted by the culture and philanthropy of these missionaries; for until then the only Europeans whom he had encountered were uncouth traders or mercenaries. Unfortunately, however, the missionaries misunderstood the quality of the king's interest; their hope of converting him was aroused and with it their patriotism, which had probably been previously stimulated by their struggles with the Portuguese.

In 1667 Lambert wrote Pallu, who was then in France, that he might "suggest sending an ambassador to this court like the Dutch, who have been so successful"; and in this correspondence there were frequent references to Clovis and Constantine and the idea of converting an Asiatic monarch and his subjects.<sup>52</sup> This idea ac-

corded completely with Pallu's thinking; and from 1667 to 1672 he sent a series of memoranda to Louis XIV and his Ministers, indicating ports along the Siamese coast where trading posts might be established that would prove useful to both State and Church.

"In this kingdom," wrote Pallu, "France will touch the East Indies, India, and Madagascar, and will be able to found and help establishments in Tonkin, Cochin-China, China, and Japan."<sup>53</sup> The idea of creating a trade centre at Ayuthia and at the same time converting the Siamese king came at a propitious time, when both Louis and Colbert were ruminating on commercio-colonial projects.

The re-creation of the East India Company naturally overjoyed the missionaries, who had been often perplexed over the maintenance of regular communications with France, since overland trips were still hazardous. Before 1668, when the first French post was established at Surat, French ships did not sail farther east than Madagascar. Now, like the Capuchins in India, the missionaries in Siam made themselves useful to the nascent company and were able to furnish it with much valuable information. Pallu's program was to make common cause with the company; each would gain by the alliance, one acquiring commercial, and the other spiritual, predominance.

On his return to Siam from Europe in 1673, Pallu brought with him a letter from Louis XIV and another from the Pope thanking Phra Narai for his favors to the missionaries. The king was flattered, and his interest in France was further aroused. As bearer of a royal letter, Pallu had his first chance to be presented at court as a foreign ambassador; and his first interview, in October 1673, initiated the struggle later repeated by all European envoys, who refused to prostrate themselves or enter the royal presence barefooted. The king finally agreed that the missionary might "remain with his shoes on, seated on a richly embroidered carpet, and do the honors in European fashion."<sup>54</sup> This was an extraordinary concession, and it increased French prestige above that of other Occidentals in the country.

A few days afterwards, the king again summoned the missionaries to Louvo and talked with them for three hours about Louis XIV. As a result of this conversation, the king declared his

intention of offering to his royal colleague of France a port where a town might be built and called Louis-le-Grand. The bishops' dreams were fast becoming a reality as the king's benevolence was interpreted as a sign of his imminent conversion. The following day the missionaries had an interview with the Prime Minister, but this proved disappointing because of his "extreme attachment to idols." News of the honorable reception given to their letters was relayed to Louis and the Pope by the bishops, who asked the king for another letter, this time accompanied by presents.

In the meantime, Phra Narai continued his amiable attentions; and the missionaries in turn tried to make themselves useful to the king. Père Thomas, a skilled engineer and architect, helped the king design the new forts at Bangkok and Ayuthia that were being built as a precaution against Dutch aggression;<sup>66</sup> and when the king later moved his residence to Lopburi, Père Thomas helped him not only with the fortifications but with the palace and observatory as well. Missionaries were often seen at court, discussing religion with the king or his Ministers; and the king ordered an official to attend the services at St. Joseph's and to report to him regularly on the sermons.

Despite the king's increasing favors, the evangelical successes of the mission were mediocre, both at Ayuthia and in the surrounding country. Portuguese hostility had never been appeased; and Rome's Bulls, which now fell thick and fast in support of the French bishops, were denounced by the Portuguese as forgeries. In 1668 some Muslim missionaries arrived at Ayuthia with the same goal of converting the king; but Phra Narai reassured the uneasy French missionaries that, if he ever changed his religion, it would certainly not be to accept Islam.

In 1675 the Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulkon appeared on the scene. At the age of ten Phaulkon had left his home in Cephalonia to sail as a cabin boy to England. After many adventures, he rose to the position of mate in a ship belonging to the English East India Company, bound for India, Java, and Siam. For a number of years he alternately traded and smuggled in the Malay Peninsula, helping the famous White brothers, who, as interlopers in the Siamese trade, were the bane of the company's existence. Perhaps it was from them that Phaulkon acquired the anglophobia

that later made him so pro-French in his sentiments. In any case, after Phaulkon entered the Phraklang's service in 1680, he encouraged other English interlopers to come to Ayuthia and as a consequence was accused by the company of having had a hand in the burning of their factory there.

After years in Siamese official service, Phaulkon rose by a brilliant opportunism from the position of Treasury clerk to that of king's favorite and dictator of Siamese policy. He was said to have become firmly entrenched in the king's favor by his exposure of certain Indian frauds at the Court, and his rise synchronized with two other important developments. The first was Phra Narai's increasing fear of the Dutch, which was already making him court French favor; and the second was the arrival of the first ship sent by the French East India Company to Siam.

When Colbert re-established the East India Company in 1664, he found that the major points of East Indian interest were already in the hands of the English or Dutch. He therefore turned his attention to the still open Malay Peninsula and Siam, where French missionaries had already paved the way. There, too, the merchandise of China and Japan could be bought, which was especially important now that these countries were closed to Europeans. At first this alliance of French religious and commercial motives was mutually advantageous; but it eventually proved disastrous. In 1682 Bourreau-Deslandes, who had been sent from the French post at Surat to found a factory in Siam, wrote to the French company asking if he must really obey the Bishop of Ayuthia's orders in a field that was beyond his sphere and training.<sup>66</sup> He had always reported to the missionary any important proposals made to him by the king, but he wanted to know in writing if he was bound to do so.

The arrival of the company's first ship in Siam brought word of the Peace of Nymwegen, as well as an envoy bearing letters and presents for Phra Narai. This finally decided the king to send an embassy to France under the chaperonage of a missionary. Pallu was, of course, delighted and recommended to the missionaries accompanying these envoys to Paris to show them schools, convents, and charitable institutions, and also, if possible, to convert them en route.<sup>67</sup> This first Siamese embassy consisted of three

very high officials, accompanied by a suite of thirty. They took with them a letter for Louis written on a sheet of gold, and rare, if inconvenient, presents, including elephants and rhinoceroses. In his letter Phra Narai offered Singora to the French, although at this time its revolt had not been subdued and he had previously and vainly offered it to the English. However, the embassy-bearing ship was wrecked off the coast of Madagascar and went down with its very assorted *corps et biens*.

In France, word of the embassy's arrival had stirred great expectations; and when it was learned that the ship had foundered, Parisian disillusionment took a very anti-clerical form. Dutch propaganda made many doubt that an embassy had ever been sent at all. The missionaries were blamed for costing the company dear, and certain merchants even wrote to the company's directors warning them against missionary fanaticism as being harmful to commerce. But to Louis XIV, as well as to the missionaries, Siamese commerce and the conversion of Phra Narai were interlinked objectives. Even the hard-headed Colbert could not resist the bishop's patriotic appeal: "*A peine savait-on autrefois s'il y avait une France, surtout avant que nous y fussions arrivés.*"<sup>58</sup>

Such were hardly the motives that prompted the other partners in the alliance. Phaulkon's recent re-conversion by the Jesuits to Catholicism—after a brief apostasy to Protestantism in England—certainly played some part; but his main desire for a French alliance was to bolster his position at court, which was bitterly and dangerously envied by the Siamese officials.

During the interval between the shipwreck of the first mission and the dispatch of the second, relations continued to be pleasant between the king and the mission; Phra Narai even accepted a crucifix from Bishop Laneau. Pallu returned to Siam in July 1682 with new letters from Louis XIV and Innocent VI; he also brought some presents, including mirrors, artificial flowers, and religious pictures, which were so mediocre and so damaged by the voyage that on Phaulkon's advice Pallu presented them in his own rather than the king's name. Bourreau-Deslandes, in the meantime, had stayed on in Siam from 1680 to 1684; but his activities were cramped by the lack of resources—only one French ship coming to Siam in all that time. Nevertheless, the king's amiability was such that the



French company secured a treaty giving them the pepper monopoly and freedom to purchase Chinese and Japanese goods.

Phra Narai was not discouraged when he learned of the fate of his first embassy but declared that his intention of cementing friendship with France was firmer than ever. The new officials whom he sent were not, however, given ambassadorial rank; and this made it impossible for them to be received by Louis XIV. They were sent to ask for a French embassy, and the missionaries urged that it be clerical rather than lay. The second Siamese envoys, according to their chaperon, Père Vachet, first landed in England in 1684 and then proceeded to France, where they stayed for three months and were well received although their behavior was most trying. Their rich costumes, strange headdress, and even stranger conduct made them an object of general curiosity. It was noted that they ate and drank little and talked even less. Their aim, they managed to communicate, was to investigate the fate of their predecessors, to persuade Colbert of the value of Siam's alliance and trade, and to congratulate the king upon the birth of the Duke of Burgundy.

The Siamese were assured by the French Ministers that the best way to cement an alliance was to have a common religion, and it was then for the first time that the rumor circulated of Phra Narai's imminent conversion. Louis XIV was delighted at the double prospect of ruining Dutch commerce and conquering and converting an exotic kingdom and readily assented to sending an embassy. The Chevalier de Chaumont, a converted Protestant, was chosen as its head—a perfect choice from the mission viewpoint. He belonged to one of France's oldest families and had been first a sea captain and then a major-general in the armies of the Levant. Accompanying the embassy went six Jesuit mathematicians; and in the instructions given to Chaumont, the king's objective was defined as the conversion of Phra Narai, in terms of optimism that certainly exceeded the hopes of the better informed missionaries.

### *Chaumont's Mission*

The French embassy left Brest early in March 1685 and arrived off Singora the following September. Here Père Vachet almost persuaded Chaumont to take possession of that town in Louis XIV's name, but the fear of offending Phaulkon prevented Chau-

mont from doing what subsequently might have changed the whole course of events. On September 23 they arrived at Ayuthia, where Phra Narai had enormous quantities of provisions awaiting them. His early admiration of the French had been enhanced by his envoys' reports of Versailles' magnificence although he was astonished at Louis' insistence on his conversion.

The king showed his pleasure over the envoy's arrival by making a number of concessions in the customary ceremonies at their reception. Moreover, whereas ambassadors were usually accorded only two royal interviews, upon arrival and departure, Chaumont was granted a private audience in a secret apartment to which no foreigner had ever penetrated before. When he left, Chaumont was given a title, the highest distinction in the kingdom; and his entire sojourn in Siam was punctuated by an unending stream of presents, fêtes, elephant hunts, and banquets with dramas and fireworks.

Chaumont believed that the religious side of his mission was more important than the political, which was quite the reverse of Phra Narai's and Phaulkon's viewpoint. At his first interview Chaumont expounded nothing less than a missionary harangue so tactless that Phaulkon later admitted that he had not dared to translate it. Even Louis' letter was couched in terms less strong than his ambassador's first address. When no tangible results were forthcoming after three royal audiences, Chaumont presented his request in writing, in spite of the missionaries' warning not to press the point as Phra Narai's conversion was not imminent.

The king replied to Chaumont's letter that he could not become a Christian for domestic reasons, and that he did not want to change a religion that had been accepted and practised uninterruptedly in his kingdom for 2,229 years; but that he was willing to permit Christianity to be preached if nothing was said contrary to the laws of the realm.<sup>66</sup> It is quite possible that Chaumont's memorandum never reached the king—a suspicion fostered by the fact that these religious concessions were not put into official form until so near the time of Chaumont's departure that there was no opportunity for their discussion. The very liberal terms of this treaty were never published, and they may have been made solely on Phaulkon's authority.

On the commercial side, negotiations were less dilatory and

more productive. Apart from the payment of import and export duties, the East India Company was granted complete freedom of trade, except in the case of certain goods purchased through royal channels; it also acquired a monopoly of Puket tin and the port of Singora. Chaumont's treaty, signed in December 1685, assured the interests of property rather than of commerce. Until this period dyed cloth had been the company's chief article of trade, but in 1686 the protectionist Louvois tried to prevent its import. Thereafter the chief imports looked for from Siam, in addition to Chinese and Japanese merchandise, were saltpetre, pepper, drugs, and spices, all of which gave more importance to French enterprise in that country.

On the political side, the outstanding concession was a grant of extraterritoriality to French subjects in Siam who were not in Phra Narai's service. Singora was to be fortified and occupied by the French, and there was some talk of an aggressive alliance against the Dutch. Phaulkon also suggested stationing French garrisons at Mergui and Bangkok, but Chaumont's powers did not extend to such commitments. Phaulkon was obviously dissatisfied with what he considered meagre results and turned to other channels of negotiation. This brought to the fore another factor in these complicated negotiations—the feud between the S.M.E. missionaries and the Jesuits, which was thereby transplanted from Europe to the Orient.<sup>60</sup>

One of the six Jesuits accompanying the Chaumont mission was Père Tachard, formerly a missionary to Central America. On his arrival at Ayuthia he had conceived a great admiration for Phaulkon, to the point of acting as his secretary and even as his servant. Phaulkon was the more ready to ally himself with the Jesuits, who had been responsible for his conversion, because Chaumont, with whose ideas he had come into conflict, was supported and advised by the S.M.E. missionaries. The fact that the Jesuits then dominated at Versailles did not escape Phaulkon in his anxiety to effect the Franco-Siamese alliance, and he tried to manoeuvre Père Tachard into replacing Bishop Laneau as intermediary between the Siamese and French Courts.

The prestige of the S.M.E. missionaries had already suffered through Chaumont's failure, and it was recalled that it was they

who had first suggested Phra Narai's conversion. To win the French alliance without this preliminary conversion, Phaulkon secretly commissioned Tachard to suggest that the whole country might be converted by giving important posts in the palaces and provinces of Siam to French Catholics, who would then be in a position of influence. The Jesuits might come too, but in lay rather than clerical capacity. Tachard succeeded so well in his secret diplomacy that by 1689 one hundred Frenchmen were enrolled for service in Siam and were about to embark when word came of the revolution there. Phaulkon entrusted a second memorandum to Tachard for the Pope, complaining strongly of the behavior of the S.M.E. missionaries. From the time that Tachard took over, the S.M.E. missionaries played no further part in the negotiations until they had to salvage the French garrison after the revolt.

Advantageous as it was, Chaumont's treaty was far from satisfying Versailles or French public opinion. La Bruyère ridiculed the idea of the mission:

We travel to the end of the earth to convert the East—in other words, to make proposals there which, if they were made to us, would be regarded as laughable and insane.<sup>61</sup>

In Paris, the high cost of the mission was contrasted with the paucity of its results. Certainly the negotiations had been conducted without adequate knowledge of the king's religious attitude. However, as the agreement was not a formal treaty, it was easy enough to send back more envoys with a new list of commercial and religious proposals. This time the type of ambassadors sent clearly showed the swing away from religion. The merchant Ceberet, accompanied by the lawyer La Loubère, with a force of 636 French soldiers under the elderly General Desfarges, was ordered to occupy certain strategic points in Siam and to assure the execution of Chaumont's agreement. They arrived in Ayuthia in 1687.

### *La Loubère's Mission*

Armed with a patent of nobility for Phaulkon and many valuable presents for the king and his officials, La Loubère was in-

structed to refuse the offer of Singora and to insist on having French governors and garrisons placed at Mergui and Bangkok, where they could assure control of the country in the event of opposition to Phaulkon's pro-French policy. Although this proposal was a surprise to both Phra Narai and Phaulkon, the latter could not but welcome a force that would guarantee his insecure position. Moreover, at that time no one dreamed that six hundred Europeans could do much harm among millions of Asiatics. Phaulkon made these French garrisons palatable to Phra Narai by insisting that they take an oath of allegiance to the Siamese king. This concession was a triumph for Phaulkon but was regarded as humiliating by the French, notably Ceberet and La Loubère, and increased their dislike of him. The cautious Desfarges consented only because his troops had been reduced by sickness during the voyage and were in no condition to fight. The Jesuits were now the only wholehearted supporters of Phaulkon, who was more and more disliked by the Siamese because they blamed his policy for the current English war and the delivery of their country into the hands of Europeans.

In December 1687 a new treaty was signed extending France's commercial privileges but leaving intact the monopolies retained by the Dutch. Commerce in tin, ivory, elephants, saltpetre, lead, and sappanwood, was still reserved to the Crown. Land was granted to the French on which to build a factory as well as

some suitable island ten leagues from Mergui to fortify it and use it as the company pleases provided that, before God, the company undertakes never to make use of it against the interests and rights of the king of Siam.<sup>62</sup>

On the termination of these negotiations, Ceberet, who represented the company, left Ayuthia; but La Loubère, as royal representative, stayed on until January 1688, taking back with him the fourth Siamese embassy, which, like the first, never reached France.

After La Loubère's departure the company remained apparently quiet until the time came for garrisoning Mergui with French troops. By then it was obvious that the suspicions of Siamese officials had been aroused regarding France's ultimate intentions. Phaulkon had undermined the discipline of the French troops by

giving them presents with a view to transferring their loyalty to himself.<sup>63</sup> Indiscipline certainly resulted; and the arrogant soldiers made themselves thoroughly disliked. Since Tachard had returned to France to bring back more soldiers, the sole remaining restraint on Phaulkon's behavior was removed. Division reigned among the French command; and sickness decimated the soldiers' ranks at Mergui, where only thirty remained in a condition to defend themselves.<sup>64</sup>

### *The Revolution of 1688*

Phra Narai's role in the ensuing events is obscure. It is probable that he had been warned of the growth of the anti-foreign party, but that he was so absorbed in his admiration for Louis XIV that he paid no attention to it. The religious prejudices of even so tolerant a people as the Siamese had been aroused, and the king was not unnaturally suspected of Catholic leanings. Moreover, he had adopted as his successor a convert to Christianity, a prince consequently marked out for future domination by the French Jesuits.

In March 1688 the king became seriously ill with dropsy, and this precipitated the usual palace intrigues over the succession. He was persuaded to appoint as regent Phra Pitraya, the head of the anti-foreign element and the sworn enemy of Phaulkon, whom he thus displaced in the king's favor. Phra Pitraya had distinguished himself during the Burmese wars, and his popularity with the army was now enhanced by his opposition to Phaulkon and the French; moreover, he was now the authorized royal representative.

After the death of Phra Narai, Phra Pitraya embarked on a series of murders that disposed of all possible competitors to the throne. All the royal family were killed in a manner showing that the Siamese respect for royal birth survived the regrettable necessity of taking their lives. The victims were tied in sacks and beaten to death with scented wooden clubs, thereby escaping contact with the vulgar hand of the executioner. Pitraya next proceeded against the Europeans, with the exception of the still favored Dutch, and imprisoned all the French, English, and Portuguese then living in Ayuthia. The Portuguese were not an important group, and most of the English were already in prison as a result of the current war. Now only the French troops remained to be dealt with.

In the meantime, Phaulkon, aware of the danger, had sent for Desfarges to bring the French troops to his assistance. Desfarges actually started out but turned back prudently to Bangkok when he learned of the king's death. No hope was then left for Phaulkon, who was arrested on a charge of treason, cruelly tortured, and finally executed. After Phaulkon's death Pitraya again tried to lure Desfarges and his troops to Louvo, and his refusal was the signal for an attack on the fort of Bangkok. Simultaneously Pitraya unleashed a violent persecution of the native Christians and imprisoned the French missionaries.

Only at first did the Siamese besiege Bangkok's fort with determination. By September Phra Pitraya became discouraged and anxious only to get the French troops out of the country. Accordingly, negotiations for evacuation were opened and were well under way when a French warship arrived bringing reinforcements for the Bangkok garrison. This ship served to help evacuate the garrison, as there was at this time only one French ship in Siam, which was quite inadequate for repatriating nearly seven hundred men. The missionaries again were brought to the fore as intermediaries in the ungrateful task of liquidating this unfortunate venture, which they had launched under happier auspices. Bishop Laneau and his associates had to stand security for the return of three Siamese ships and their crews, which were lent by the king to carry the French overflow to Pondichéry. The garrison retired with the honors of war but had to leave the fort intact for the Siamese. Theoretically the company retained its commercial privileges, and the missionaries were permitted to continue to preach in Siam.

Desfarges' confrères at Mergui were in the meantime faring less well. A French garrison under Major Debruan had come to that town in March 1688, and at first the native governor was very helpful in constructing the new fort. But soon the French noticed that he was increasingly less cooperative and was even impeding their work. A messenger to Phaulkon bearing complaints of this treatment was arrested; and simultaneously rumors reached Mergui of an anti-French conspiracy at Ayuthia, which inspired Debruan to insure his defenses. When he received a letter from Desfarges ordering him to Louvo, he correctly interpreted it as a ruse and refused to go. Thereupon he was attacked by the Siamese but

managed to hold out until the lack of water finally compelled him and his men to evacuate to the ships, which had miraculously remained undamaged. He was captured and enslaved with his companions, but they eventually succeeded in reaching Pondichéry via Madras.

With the failure of his Siamese venture, Louis XIV became absorbed in other projects and left his once cherished mission in Siam to fend for itself. Père Tachard, however, was not so easily discouraged and made three attempts to return to Siam. Twice he was turned back at Mergui; but on the third attempt he was granted an audience with the king, to whom he presented the undelivered letter that Louis had written to Phra Narai in 1687. Unfortunately he frightened the king by mentioning a fort at Tenasserim and a factory at Petchaburi, with the result that the reply he received was merely an Oriental eulogy of the French king and nothing more. It was obvious that the Siamese were not well disposed towards the French in general, or towards Tachard in particular. That same year a newly arrived missionary brought a fresh letter from Louis XIV to Pitraya, but the king kept him waiting a year before he was given an audience. This proved to the mission that it could no longer count on political support. The missionaries continued their work and faced a century and a half of apparently fruitless labor and hardships in Siam.

### *The Nineteenth Century*

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, certain apparently irrelevant forces were working to draw France and Siam together once more. Increasing intervention in Cambodian affairs led to the establishment of a virtual Siamese suzerainty over that country, as well as to the occupation of the two western provinces of Battambang and Angkor. With the consolidation of the Annamite empire under Gialong and his French officers in the first years of the nineteenth century, Cambodia became the scene of Siam's and Annam's rival ambitions. Annam, being nearer and more bellicose than Siam, was gaining ground at the latter's expense. When the Khmer kings tried to play off the two countries against each other, rival armies in alternating invasions would chisel off bits of Khmer territory; but usually they preferred to compromise through a kind of joint



suzerainty exercised over a series of puppet kings rather than fight out the issue directly. Cambodian affairs muddled along in this way until the French entered the Indo-Chinese scene in the 1860's and 1870's.

Just as in the seventeenth century the Siamese approached the French out of fear of the Dutch, so in the nineteenth century Siamese overtures to France were inspired by the rise of British power in southeastern Asia. In 1840 the Siamese Government expressed a desire to the newly installed French consul at Singapore to see French ships come to Bangkok, but these proposals remained vague until about 1856 when the English were seriously dismembering Burma and annexing Pegu. A treaty initiated at this time by the Siamese was negotiated with France; and the French agent, the first in Siam since La Loubère, arrived in Bangkok at a moment favorable for increasing French prestige. He was given a warmer welcome than Bowring; and the two treaties, although similar, showed certain significant differences, which later French writers were to interpret as Siamese willingness to accept a French protectorate. The basis for this conclusion was a letter written to Napoleon III by Mongkut apropos the treaty's ratification.

Although none of these French envoys dreamed of demanding the king's conversion, the work of the French mission was far from neglected in this treaty. Missionaries were given freedom to preach and to build schools, seminaries, and churches, provided they conformed to the laws of the realm. Extraterritorial rights followed the Bowring model and centred all foreign activity in Bangkok; and French ships were granted the right of access to the Menam—a concession that later developed vital significance. Commercially, France was placed on the most-favored-nation basis.

The treaty of 1856 opened an era of amicable and pacific relations between the two countries and initiated a period of commercial prosperity that came to an end soon after the Franco-Prussian War, when English competition became so keen that French trade fell into the category classified as 'divers' on the customs returns. Rival nations produced articles cheaper than France, whose merchants did not trouble to cultivate the Siamese market.<sup>65</sup> From 1885 to 1905 the French had virtually no commercial stake in Siam but were, like all Europeans at the time, attracted by the wealth of

the Menam valley and the potentialities of the rest of the country.

The situation was almost identical from the political viewpoint. The diplomacy of the Second Empire was busy almost everywhere else and did not bother to follow up the Siamese advances. Napoleon III did dispatch Admiral Laguère, then commanding the French forces in the East, to treat with Siam; but the Crimean War intervened, and it was left to Montigny to pick up the broken threads. Then came the French conquest of Cochin-China, which brought a profound change in Franco-Siamese relations, since it abruptly curtailed Siam's expansion to the east.

By 1867 the handwriting on the wall was sufficiently clear for Siam to decide that she must at least obtain the confirmation of her previous conquests in the east. That same year saw the consolidation of the French conquest in Cochin-China by the acquisition of her three eastern provinces. The treaty of 1867 was regarded as disastrous for France's new Indo-Chinese interests, since it confirmed Siam in possession of the Cambodian provinces of Battambang and Angkor. But it did have the single advantage of annulling a secret agreement that King Norodom of Cambodia had made with Siam in 1863, recognizing her suzerain rights.

In the 1870's France's defeat at the hands of Prussia lowered her prestige in the Orient and put new life into her struggle with Annam. Moreover, the discovery made by the Legrée expedition in 1867-70 that the Mekong was largely unnavigable shifted French interest back to the Red River route through Tonkin into China. The completion of the British conquests in northern Burma made the race with France more acute, and both rivals were closing in on Siam.

Nineteen more years were to pass, however, before the problem of Cambodia's and Laos' frontiers was solved; and in the meantime Siam was penetrating farther into that region. England insinuated to Siam that it was foolish to be concerned over the troublesome Shan States when rich compensation lay to the east. Subsequent events showed that Siam would never have risked a struggle with France over Laos if she had not felt certain of English support.

For fifteen years after the treaty of 1867, Siam respected the restriction of her activities in the areas under French protection. After 1883, however, these areas included all the territory over

which Annam had vaguely exercised suzerainty; and by that time Siam had extended her control from beyond Chiengsen to Luang-Prabang, and farther northeast to the Black River. A French mission, headed by Auguste Pavie, was sent to dissipate the obscurity then surrounding these regions and to ascertain how effective Siamese authority was therein. The anomalous position of the Lao countries was further complicated at this time by an invasion of the Chinese Hos and by the presence of armed bands of Chinese bandits who were terrorizing the mountain peoples as well as the Laos.

Pavie arrived at the court of the incompetent king of Luang-Prabang at a highly dramatic moment.<sup>66</sup> A Ho invasion was imminent; and the king had appealed for protection to Bangkok, where the anti-Ho expedition was prepared with such secrecy that the French Minister at Bangkok only heard of it after its departure. The Siamese at the court of Luang-Prabang, Pavie reported, were effective enough when it came to preventing his entering into contact with the Lao king but were quite unable to protect either the king or his capital from the Hos, who captured and pillaged it before his eyes. Pavie's view confirmed Garnier's verdict as to the oppressive character and unpopularity of Siamese rule and his belief that the Laos, a prey to insecurity and brigandage, would gladly accept French rule if it meant an effective protectorate.<sup>67</sup>

The French at this time were everywhere seeing the fine Siamese hand, particularly in the revolt of the Emperor Ham Nghi and in the continued troubles in Tonkin. However, these more easterly preoccupations, as well as the growing opposition to Ferry's colonial policy in Paris, prevented France from making a stronger stand against Siam. Moreover, her protests to Bangkok were rather vague as to the issue at stake. Accordingly, Annam was asked to formulate her rights in the region, which she claimed dated back to the seventeenth century. Labored negotiations between the Governments of Siam and Indo-China resulted in the Convention of Luang-Prabang in May 1886, in which France's claims to Annam's suzerain rights over Laos were recognized. When this agreement was ratified, the problem of Siam's frontiers became more pressing than ever; and Pavie was once again sent to investigate the situation.

In the meantime, the Siamese advance was renewed in the southeast with the occupation of Attopeu and Stung Treng along the Annam Range. This confirmed Pavie's contention that Siam's advance, checked in one region, would break out elsewhere. He therefore drew up a "plan of pacification," which resulted in a new agreement in March 1889. Once again Siam agreed to stop her eastward expansion and to evacuate the region of Cammon and the Black River, but in compensation she renewed her penetration of the Mekong basin. By this time France had renewed her interest in colonial expansion, and British encroachments to the west and Pavie's explorations stimulated a series of articles in the Parisian press, which put renewed vitality into French claims. Allegations were made by both France and Siam that the agreement of 1889 had been violated, and in the absence of impartial evidence the exact truth is impossible to ascertain. The French began to maintain that the Mekong's left bank should serve as frontier, and their insistence upon an immediate settlement marked a step beyond their previous willingness to accept the *status quo* until a commission could settle the question.

The year 1892 and the opening months of 1893 witnessed an attempt by England to settle the Mekong problem directly with France, and for a time diplomatic exchanges between the two major powers diverted France from exerting pressure directly on Siam. In March 1893, however, France's forward push began again. The French ambassador to London declared that France regarded none of the left bank of the Mekong as Siamese territory; all that had been heretofore Annamite was now French. This claim was presented the following week to Bangkok, but the Siamese Cabinet refused to consider it. In the absence of the king, the government was as determined to resist as the French were to insist.<sup>68</sup>

On April 1 the French occupied Stung Treng, and the next day the island of Khone, without firing a shot. It had never occurred to the Siamese to fortify these two important strategic points. They were, of course, counting on British intervention; but Great Britain had never supported Siam's claims to the lower Mekong and would certainly not risk war with a major European power on that issue. Lord Rosebery advised Siam to be more conciliatory, but his coun-

sel was ignored. Pavie, now French Minister at Bangkok, informed Prince Devawongse that the gunboat *Lutin* was anchoring off Paknam to support French claims to the left bank of the Mekong. But Siam refused to yield.

### *The Incident of 1893*

After a series of incidents throughout May and June, the French announced that the fleet at Saigon would be sent to Bangkok if the situation so demanded. The Siamese replied by taking hasty and ineffectual measures to close the river. On July 10 Pavie notified Prince Devawongse that the French gunboats *Inconstant* and *Comète* were about to arrive and would cross the bar on July 13, in accordance with treaty rights, and that they would require the services of a pilot. But Devawongse, disregarding the legal aspects of the case and its practical consequences, replied that the gunboats' arrival was not based on valid motives and that it was therefore contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the treaty for them even to anchor off Paknam.

At the last minute the Paris Government decided to waive its treaty right to sail up to Bangkok and ordered its ships to anchor inside the bar. But the officers in charge either never received these orders or simply disregarded them. In any case, they proceeded up the river to Bangkok, encountering only the feeblest opposition from this totally unprepared and untrained Siamese navy, and anchored off the French Legation. On the following day the king, shocked at his realization of Siam's impotence, called a truce. After five hours of tension a letter arrived from Pavie saying that no attack on the town had been intended and that he would come next morning to discuss the situation. Oriental suavity was equal to the occasion; and when he arrived, Prince Devawongse congratulated the French commander on his skill and daring in forcing an entrance. That day being July 14, all the Siamese vessels in the river were dressed out in the tricolor. When the French ships later departed, the people along the river casually remarked that their king would not let them stay any longer.

At a meeting of the Chamber of Deputies on July 18, Develle pointed out that Bangkok was a city of 350,000 people and that it would necessitate a large army of occupation. Moreover, an attack on the Siamese capital might have aroused other nations to inter-

vene. But when the Chamber learned that all Pavie had got from the encounter of July 13 was the simple promise that Siamese troops along the Mekong would be withdrawn and hostilities suspended, they judged this to be wholly inadequate.

Consequently, on July 20, a 48-hour ultimatum was delivered, with a blockade of the Menam as the price of refusal. The French demanded the territory on the left bank of the Mekong, including Luang-Prabang, an indemnity of Fr. 3 million, and the punishment of those responsible for attacking French ships and French officers. It was naturally the territorial loss that Siam refused to accept. It took a week for the Siamese, headed by Devawongse, to realize finally the inadequacy of Siam's defenses and the futility of counting any longer on British aid, especially after the blockade had begun to hurt their shipping. Moreover, by July 29 the French were requiring additional guarantees; the occupation of Chantabun, Siam's second biggest port, pending her evacuation of the left bank of the Mekong; the creation of an unfortified zone on the Siamese side of the Mekong; and the right to establish consulates at Korat and Nan. On August 3 these terms were accepted, and the blockade was lifted. It was left to the Governor of Cochin-China, Le Myre de Villers, to negotiate the details of the treaty.

### *The Treaty of 1893*

But the Siamese had still not really accepted the situation. Sundry procrastinations prolonged negotiations for another six weeks, in the course of which Siam's attitude stiffened. The French eventually lost patience, and Le Myre issued a final four-day ultimatum that proved effective. The treaty was signed on October 3, 1893. France received her Fr. 3 million indemnity, 50,000 square miles of territory, and specific advantages for her subjects in Siam; Siam agreed to demilitarize her Indo-China frontier; and the French occupied Chantabun as a guarantee. Advantageous as they were, these terms were criticized in France as an inadequate result of five months' activities, especially as it was left to Siam to enforce certain of the treaty's provisions and as Cambodia's two lost provinces were still abandoned. On the other hand, France had no idea of pressing Siam to the point of war, and there was always the unknown factor of possible British intervention.

One of the treaty's worst omissions was its failure to define the

status of protégé. The French complained that persons so classified were being unfairly treated by the Siamese. The treaty provided that Siam should hand over to the French authorities in Siam all the French Annamite, Khmer, and Lao subjects detained in the country, and that she should set no obstacle in the way of the return to Laos of the former inhabitants of the Mekong's left bank who had either been deported into Siam or whose ancestors had crossed over to Siam at no matter how remote a period. Nothing was determined about those who elected to stay in Siam; the French consulate registered all of them without proper investigation. The French later claimed that the Siamese had refused to let their protégés be protected by French jurisdiction, to which the king replied that he could not ruin his military forces by permitting the extraction of the Khmers, who made up the majority of the naval recruits.

The treaty of 1893 unsettled a great deal and left the Siamese Question still open. It was clear that the French would never be satisfied until the two lost provinces were returned to Cambodia, and that the Siamese would not rest easy until Chantabun was evacuated and the protégé-extraterritoriality issue was regulated.

#### *The Treaties of 1902 to 1907*

After a series of abortive negotiations and interminable discussions, a treaty was finally initialed by Delcassé and Phya Suriya in 1902, according to which France got some more comparatively worthless land in Laos in return for abandoning the neutral zone on the Mekong. Relations between the two countries were still virtually on a warlike footing, and the major issues of the protégés and the mastery of the Mekong were still unsolved. So violent were the objections to the treaty in Indo-China and Paris that it was not presented for ratification, and negotiations were resumed.

The French Colonial Party, so called by the British, complained bitterly at this time that, while France was negotiating interminably, the English were expanding in the Malay Peninsula and on the upper Mekong and at the same time dominating Bangkok's administration. Aside from her political interests, France had Fr. 10,000,000 invested in Siam, a branch of the Banque de l'Indochine at Bangkok, and 9,000 Chinese and Indo-Chinese protégés in the

country. However, it was not until the Germans began to press hard on the English and Japan had raised Asiatic morale by her triumphant opposition to Russia that the French Government finally realized that a liquidation of the Siamese Question was imperative. It took approximately the same length of time for Siam to realize that the French would not evacuate Chantabun as a preliminary to further negotiations, and that they regarded their agreement with England in 1896 as having given them a free hand along the Mekong in return for their recognition of Great Britain's zone of influence in the peninsula.

Negotiations in 1904 were carried on in the restless atmosphere created by the Russo-Japanese war. It was largely due to the American Foreign Adviser, S. H. Strobel, that Siam determined to make the concessions necessary to liquidate her ancient enmity with France. In the agreement reached in 1904, the Laos frontier was slightly modified to France's advantage; and a joint commission was appointed to trace the frontier between Tonlé Sap and the sea. Siam renounced her sovereignty over Luang-Prabang, and it was agreed that Chantabun would be evacuated when all these conditions were fulfilled. French legal advisers were to be appointed at Bangkok, and France was to get a share of Siam's public works contracts. The vexations of the protégé issue were somewhat obviated; the worst features of the neutral zone were abolished; and a reorganization of the Court of Appeals was envisaged that would reduce France's extraterritorial rights. A general feeling of relief followed the negotiation of this treaty, which, though not wholly satisfactory, was much better than the still-born effort of 1902.

However, further trouble arose over the ambiguous wording of the 1904 treaty. A Boundary Commission under Colonel F. Bernard discovered real difficulties that remained to be solved, and negotiations were resumed. The result was the very important treaty of 1907—a real diplomatic triumph, to which the press and all shades of party opinion in France were favorable. In broad outlines it meant the surrender by France of important extraterritorial rights over subjects registered at the consulate after 1907, in return for Cambodia's lost provinces. This was a territorial success for France and a moral victory for Siam, since it acknowledged her progress and treated her as a juridical equal.



This treaty was so swiftly and secretly negotiated that the British were taken by surprise. It reopened for Great Britain the extraterritoriality issue and the question of the exact terms of her pay-off. With France the problem had been primarily political, whereas in the case of England it involved her whole Oriental policy and was far more economic than political. The new treaty was accepted without debate in the Chamber of Deputies, and for thirty years it put an end to France's fears of a Siamo-Japanese conspiracy against Indo-China. The final sop was thrown to French pride when a commission of French jurists was called by Chulalongkorn in 1908 to codify the remaining Siamese laws. This brought to Siam Frenchmen who were to become authorities on the law of the land and to be associated with her juristic progress—Padoux, Guyon, Rivière, Lingat, and Moncharville.

### *The Treaty of 1925*

The treaty of 1907 marked the beginning of a long period of increasingly amicable relations between France and Siam. Before the war of 1914-18, Siamese aviators were trained in France, where they again served when Siam joined the Allied cause in 1917. In the post-war period a French firm received the contract to build the new railway bridge across the Menam; a few locomotives were ordered from Batignolles; and the law school at Bangkok became definitely a French-dominated institution. More students went to France, but still nothing like so many as were sent to England. The work of the French Minister, Pila, was particularly happy in the negotiations of 1925, which were notable for the absence of political blackmail. The treaty that ensued marked a big advance for Siam in ridding her of extraterritoriality and control over her tariff. "Passive juxtaposition" was the French Minister's felicitous definition of Siam's relations with Indo-China, which for the first time were the object of a special arrangement apart from the main treaty.

Before 1914 French policy had never ceased to consider the Mekong a French river, and the Siamese had consistently refused to view it otherwise than as a frontier along which both countries had equal rights. The treaty of 1925 now gave tacit assent to the Siamese contention. The treaty of 1907 had brought to an end

territorial discussions between the two countries; and after accepting Siam's aid during the war, France could not reopen this point. Thus the treaty of 1925 was from every angle more beneficial to Siam than it was to France.

The special convention of 1926 relative to Indo-China was negotiated directly between Hanoi and Bangkok. The demilitarization of the Mekong was now extended to the French zone, and France acquired some of the Mekong islands and the presidency of the Permanent Mekong Commission, thereby assuring her predominance in its discussions. About two hundred more French citizens were placed under Siamese jurisdiction, but the protégé situation had now been reduced to miniature proportions.

French interests in Siam continued to be political and cultural rather than economic, despite the establishment there of a branch of the *Crédit Foncier de l'Indo-Chine* in 1927. French writers of the period often bewailed the lowly place of French shipping in Siam, which consisted of the bi-monthly appearance of a small, elderly boat on the Bangkok-Saigon run. In railroad construction Indo-China lagged behind Siam, and French Laos continued to be economically tributary to Bangkok. However, France still owned one of the six important teak companies in Siam and was intermittently interested in peninsular gold mines. Moreover, the lands owned by the French mission represented an important stake in the country.

### *Franco-Siamese Relations under the Constitutional Régime*

The *coup d'état* of 1932 did nothing immediately to alter the friendliness of Franco-Siamese relations. The development of international aviation constituted an important tie at this time. The *Alliance Française*, which had been founded before the war, continued to propagate the French language; and a Franco-Siamese Society was founded in 1935. After the failure of his revolt in October 1933, Prince Bovaradej and many of his followers fled to Saigon, where they have remained quite tranquilly in exile. France took a renewed interest in Laos in 1936, when Siamese railroad building touched the Indo-Chinese frontier at four points along the Mekong.

• More serious than Laos' trade problems was the presence of

numerous Annamite communist refugees in Siam's northeastern provinces. After the revolts of 1908 and 1916 in Indo-China, numerous Annamites had come to Siam, bringing the total number of Annamites in that country to ten thousand. By 1937 they had grown to sixty thousand. The completion of the road and railroad systems on both sides of the frontier were important factors in increasing this inflow; moreover, wages in Siam are from 20 per cent to 30 per cent higher than in Indo-China, though the cost of living is proportionately greater. Those long established in the country live grouped in villages, where they keep their own language and customs; they are either descendants of war prisoners or of Christian refugees from Tonkin. These people have intermarried with the Siamese and have not infrequently attained high positions in the Siamese Government; but they associate most of all with the Chinese, whom they find more congenial.

The Annamite newcomers, however, are highly individualistic workers and traders, who live in groups of no more than five or ten. Formerly they returned to their families in Indo-China after having made some money in Siam, but the law recently promulgated by which any children they may have in Siam become Siamese may change this habit. It is this type of Annamite who is so susceptible to the communist propaganda that is being ably spread by his compatriots in Siam.

In 1937 the long-standing amicable relations between Indo-China and Siam, based on enlightened self-interest, were threatened by vernacular press campaigns in both countries. The increasing nationalism of the constitutional régime in Siam had given rise to fears in Indo-China of Japanese penetration. Kra Canal stories were revived, and accusations of anti-foreign discrimination in Bangkok became frequent. Alarm centred particularly around Siam's new military program.

Indo-China's fears spread to Paris, especially after Siam denounced the 1925 treaty with France and reopened negotiations in 1937. Alarmist articles contained information that Siam had a standing army of sixty thousand men, which could easily be strengthened to three hundred thousand,<sup>69</sup> whereas Indo-China possessed only 18,000 native and 10,000 French troops. Shortly after this, Outrey, Cochinchina's deputy in Paris, spoke before

a French commission reminding them that Indo-China and Siam had 1,800 miles of common, undefended frontier. He quoted the reported figures of Siam's military strength, and pointed out her close relations with Japan, Italy, and Germany. He did not believe that the Siamese Government still cherished a grievance for the loss of Laos—a point that was substantiated by the maps issued to Siamese school children, in which the Annamite Range was marked as their country's natural frontier. If a conflict should break out in the Far East, said Outrey, Siam would naturally ally herself with the nations most likely to restore to her Battambang, Siemreap, and Sisophon.

In the summer of 1938 the Minister of the Colonies proposed strengthening the Indo-Chinese forces by the addition of twenty thousand men. Indo-China had only five squadrons of airplanes, as compared with Siam's hundred; her fortifications were obsolete, and her submarines were conspicuous by their absence. The French Government agreed to loan Indo-China Fr. 400,000,000, but it was claimed that this was only half of what was needed. Naturally Indo-China's armament campaign in turn alarmed Siam. Rumors spread that the Banque de l'Indochine had received orders to sell all its Siamese property, and frontier incidents around Ubol were played up.<sup>70</sup> However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a soothing communiqué to the effect that Siam's relations with France were excellent;<sup>71</sup> and the July 14 celebrations in Bangkok were made the occasion of reiterations of goodwill and regret over the press campaigns on both sides of the Mekong. Frontier courtesies between Cambodia and Siamese officials were given wide publicity; and Governor Brévié, in his speech to the Conseil Supérieur, emphasized the cordial relations that had marked the negotiations of the agreement relative to Indo-China that was appended to the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1937.

The treaty, signed in December 1937, marked no departure from the trend established twenty years before. It administered the final blow to extraterritoriality and to restrictions on Siam's tariff autonomy and placed relations generally on a reciprocal basis. A commercial and customs agreement concerning Indo-China was concluded for a five-year period at Bangkok by special envoys from Indo-China, whose diplomatic personality was

thereby for the first time fully recognized. Under this new arrangement, the tariff-free zone on the Siamese boundary of the Mekong, which had been created in 1893, was now abrogated. Both countries were henceforth free to impose customs duties, each enjoying the most-favored-nation treatment accorded by the other and mutual assistance in the suppression of contraband. The permanent Franco-Siamese Commission of the Mekong, which had not convened since 1931, now resumed its meetings in order to work out regulations regarding fishing and navigation rights and the duties of the river police along the frontier. A series of supplementary letters attached to the treaty dealt with problems arising from seasonal migrations and circulation in the frontier zone, a rearrangement necessitated by the Siamese Immigration Law of 1938.

In Paris there was some discussion of these treaty terms. The Colonial Union proposed certain measures, the most interesting among which was to negotiate jointly with Great Britain, who now had a common interest with France in preserving the *status quo* in Siam. In *Parlement* the treaty was ratified as it stood.

Throughout 1939 both countries mutually extended the olive branch. In addition to the exchange of official visits, the tone of the press of both countries was more cordial. Rumors current in France that Siam had joined the anti-Comintern pact were denied in Bangkok; but speculation as to the possibility of an Anglo-French guarantee of Siam was silenced by the very negative Siamese reaction. Nevertheless, Japan's encroachments in the southeast made Siam more susceptible to Anglo-French advances and more appreciative of their Far Eastern defenses. A Siamese military mission visited Indo-China after a French mission had come to Bangkok, and Siam made use of the occasion to affirm that the Mekong River problem could be ultimately solved by diplomacy. France began to broadcast programs from Saigon in the Siamese language, and Siamese was included in the Indo-Chinese school curriculum. In November 1939, on the initiative of the Minister of the Colonies, a railway agreement was finally concluded between Siam and Indo-China for the extension of the line from Mongkolborey to Aranya, which in turn strengthened commercial bonds. In January 1940 the Indo-Chinese Government issued an order

forbidding local papers to publish anything that might be considered offensive by the Siamese.

## GERMANY

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Germany was competing keenly with England in Siam in the fields of shipping and railroad administration and in the market for cheap manufactured articles. Until that time German interests were few. The development of rice exports had led to the construction of a German rice mill in Bangkok, and this in turn had brought German ships to transport the finished product. By 1914 half of Siam's carrying trade was done in German bottoms, but the war intervened in England's favor. The war was a great economic disaster for German interests in Siam, which had always been commercial and only occasionally tinged with politics, as when they vainly tried to acquire an island in the Gulf of Siam for a coaling station.

The official story of the war related that the Siamese Government had long been aware of currents of unrest throughout the kingdom; and that, when the king heard, early in the morning of July 22, 1917, that a German plot was being hatched in his capital, he declared war on Germany and Austria at noon. By five o'clock in the afternoon every German and Austrian in his domain was in custody, and they were later transported to India for internment. The nineteen German ships anchored in the Menam were soon flying the Siamese flag and rechristened with Siamese names.

In declaring war on Germany, the pro-Ally king and court encountered opposition from the military clique, most of whom had been German-trained. However, Siam's participation in the Allied cause proved to be wise both economically and politically. Aside from the confiscation of German properties and Siam's assumption of railroad administration, the Treaty of Versailles abrogated German extraterritoriality. Other foreigners also profited by the German expulsion. Thus England resumed control of Siam's shipping and import market, and an American replaced the German manager of the Siam Commercial Bank.

The Germans staged a remarkable comeback in the post-war era. Dr. Asmis, the first German Minister to Siam after the war, had a hard task to effect a trade recovery; but he enjoyed a unique

popularity and made great strides in helping the German community to regain its pre-war position. In this he was assisted by the Siamo-German economic agreement of February 1924. Many German commercial firms were re-established in Bangkok, and the German Club was reopened. German merchants imported firearms, hardware, chemicals, dyestuffs, medicine, machinery and tools, beer, and musical instruments. Siam welcomed this competition in her British-dominated import market, and in pre-Nazi and pre-depression days Germany came to occupy ninth place on the list of importers.

When Siam aligned herself informally with the totalitarian states, she came in for favorable Nazi consideration. Two economic missions came from Germany in 1936 and 1938 to promote Siamese trade. Germany sent equipment for the new sugar factory at cost price in return for the contracts she had received for machinery installed in the new paper and spinning factories in 1935. In view of her need for raw materials, Germany was particularly interested in Siamese trade; and the Bangkok Government's new economic policy and sound financial position were further inducements. Formerly Germany had bought heavily of Burma's rice, but its inferior quality and the exchange situation caused her to turn to Siam. The eagerness with which Siam carried on treaty negotiations with Germany in 1937 was in marked contrast to the languor that characterized the Swiss discussions, for example. To a certain degree, however, German tenders and manufacturers have suffered from Japanese competition in Siam.

On the ideological side, the German press has devoted some space to publicizing the rise of Japanese and the decline of British and French influence in Siam, with a malicious recital of the past sufferings of the Siamese at the hands of their neighbors. In the past four years Hitler has invited Siam to participate in German conferences, and in March 1938 numerous Siamese officials were decorated by the Nazi Government. Whenever the German Minister arrives or departs, it has been noted that high Siamese officials are invariably at the station. In July 1939 a new Thai-German Association was formed to hold meetings and classes in German. The number of German citizens in Siam just before the war was slightly under a hundred.

## UNITED STATES

In the early nineteenth century the same motives of trade, though without political corollaries, inspired the United States to follow England's example of making a treaty with Siam. An American ship that came to Bangkok during Crawford's negotiations was welcomed by the Siamese, and the Phraklang's comment pointed a moral for the British:

These people bring us what we are most anxious to have, plenty of firearms and ready money; and they take away large cargoes of sugar and other produce of the country.<sup>72</sup>

But this did not spare them the annoyances from which the English ships suffered. They were kept waiting unnecessarily for cargoes, sometimes for as long as six weeks, which occasioned serious losses. According to Crawford, American trade had formerly been very lucrative for Siam but was then falling off because all the advantages were on the Siamese side. At one time no less than 2,000 tons of American shipping were employed in the Siamese trade, in which Siam took arms, hardware, and cotton goods, in exchange for sugar, timber, drugs, and iron.

It was an experience common to all Europeans that these vexations grew with Nang Klao's increasing xenophobia. American merchants could no longer sell to private individuals. The king not only exercised the monopoly of purchase and sale on his own terms; he also fixed prices on articles for return cargoes, and no individual merchant dared offer any competition in buying or selling. In this way, American merchants had to pay from 20 per cent to 30 per cent more for the country's products than if they had been purchased from private dealers. Moreover, they were sometimes forced to accept payment in inferior and often unsalable articles made up of small purchases from individuals here and there, to which were added export duties that further increased the price by at least 25 per cent. Port charges and other exactions were irregular and exorbitant and came usually to about \$3.50 a ton. Presents were exacted by the whole gamut of officialdom, from the humblest clerk to the king himself, and amounted to at least \$1,000 in the case of a valuable cargo.



Another factor in the decline of American shipping to Bangkok was the rise in the price of Siamese sugar and the fact that it was now obtainable nearer home. Moreover, most Siamese products could be purchased more expeditiously at Singapore, and for only a small surcharge.

The decline of American trade with Siam prompted Edmund Roberts to visit Bangkok in the course of his semi-official mission to Cochin-China and Muscat in 1833. The object of this mission was to place the United States on a basis of equality with other nations trading in those regions. He had the usual tussle with the Phraklang over ceremonial in his audience with the king and refused to make humiliating concessions to Eastern etiquette. His treaty failed in that it did not include the most-favored-nation clause; but he succeeded in reducing duties to a standard 15 per cent and obtained permission to appoint a consul as soon as that right should be granted to any country other than Portugal.<sup>78</sup>

This treaty did nothing to improve the status of American shipping. In fact, an American consul later said that Roberts had closed rather than opened Siam to American commerce. To rectify this situation, an American merchant from Singapore, Joseph Ballestier, was sent to Bangkok seventeen years later to present American grievances and to obtain a more favorable treaty. His mission was analogous in purpose and results to that of Raja Brooke. From the very outset things went wrong. The Siamese were incensed at the choice of a merchant as envoy, and especially of one whose unsuccessful business ventures in the Straits were already well known in Bangkok. Ballestier was taken to the capital almost unattended, and he accepted a position indicating inferior rank. He could not present his letter to the king, let alone be received in royal audience. His warning, on leaving the country, that the President of the United States would resent the unfriendly reception that had been given him only succeeded in frightening the Bangkok court into taking retaliatory measures against the American missionaries who by this time had filtered into the country.

When Townsend Harris came on a mission to Siam six years later, he determined to profit by his predecessors' failure and to surround himself with all the pomp that carried so much weight at the Siamese court. But conditions had changed radically. Harris

was now dealing with Mongkut, a king favorable to Western intercourse, and he was able to follow the example of Bowring, whose treaty served him as a model. Mongkut, however, was not favorably disposed towards Harris personally, nor was he willing to treat him like Bowring; he underestimated the American mission because it did not come from a crowned head. The Phraklang urged Harris to counteract this impression by telling the king how many ships and guns the United States possessed.

When he was asked by the king why no American ship had come to Siam for eighteen years, Harris replied that the duties were too high;<sup>74</sup> that sugar could be bought more cheaply in Manila; and that, before the Siamese trade could become worth while, American merchants must be allowed to live in the country where they could pick up a cargo at cheap prices without wasting time. At this time the king was having violent scenes with Sir Harry Parkes, and Harris was sure that he could get nothing done until the English left, since "the Siamese cannot entertain two ideas at the same time." The king was opposed to granting a treaty like Bowring's; but Harris held out with arguments, taunts, sneers, and bluster. He emphasized America's capacity for developing Siam's mineral wealth and gave the king presents, which included mirrors, chandeliers, microscopes, firearms, maps, books, models of electrical apparatus, and finally a portrait of their donor, President Pierce.

Having finally drawn up the treaty, which was practically a copy of Bowring's, Harris prevailed upon an American missionary, Mattoon, to act as consul. For many years after Mattoon withdrew, there was infinite trouble in getting the right kind of men to serve as consuls. The consular correspondence of this period was filled with quarrels over appointees, past and present, and salaries; and it was a miracle that any regular work was done at all.<sup>75</sup>

One letter written to Seward by Consul Chandler in December 1862 differed from the usual run of such missives in shedding some light on the current Siamese scene. Chandler had been a missionary for sixteen years and was familiar with the country. He also knew some officials since he had had an engineer's training and his knowledge of machinery brought him into contact with those Siamese who were waking to an interest in Western science. Chandler used these opportunities to emphasize the advantages that Siam would

reap from foreign trade. But he thought that the situation was precarious for Americans, as for all foreigners in those pre-extraterritoriality days when any one might be banished for some trifling occurrence. He was very scornful of Harris's diplomacy, maintaining that the latter had been paid \$10,000 for doing what any common clerk could have accomplished since his treaty marked no improvement over the work that Bowring had done before he got there.

Just as Chandler was not backward about criticizing his predecessors, so he himself was taken to task, considerably later, by a consular successor. James Hood, writing in July 1866, stated that not one of the consuls after Mattoon had commanded the least personal respect, either from the Siamese Government or from foreign officials in Bangkok. In fact, even the king "has entered the field as one of our nation's defamers and proclaimed abroad that the high position . . . heretofore assigned to the United States was unwarranted." In proof of this contention the king stated that United States warships almost never visited Siamese waters, and that the character of its representatives in Siam "had not been such as to lead him to believe theirs to be a great nation." According to Hood, Chandler had proved himself to be a consummate scoundrel, and his successor Westevelt a roisterer. He was followed by a man inappropriately named Virgin, who for long had been chief mate aboard a Siamese vessel, a position about as respectable as that of a cook on a first-class American ship.

I am sorry to say that Mr. Virgin is the leader of a degraded class of American citizen who was formerly rather numerous here. Those now remaining of that class are mostly rum sellers and pimps. . . . We have here principally but two classes of American citizens, viz., the missionaries and their families, some mechanics and seamen, and the class already alluded to. The former class are peaceful, intelligent, and highminded. The latter class can see nothing good in these devoted missionaries and their labors, and whoever looks upon them as worthy of respect is at once denounced as a supporter of the damned hypocritical missionaries. And this kind of Billingsgate has frequently been heard from the lips of Mr. Westevelt and Mr. Virgin. I find all the missionaries are what I have represented them to be, intelligent and worthy, and with them I have taken my stand. The consequence is

that I am denounced quietly as no better than one of them, and as unworthy to represent the Government of the United States.

On finding that one of the king's half-brothers had been owing an American sea captain \$1,000 for six years, Hood made inquiries and learned that this royal prince had refused to pay on the ground that he did not like the person to whom the sum was due. Previous consuls had refused to press the claim against so exalted a personage, but Hood did so and with quick success. Hood had been appointed consul in 1865 and was the first to receive a regular salary of \$2,000.

The Americans in Siam in 1871 numbered from thirty to thirty-five families, and the clear-cut division between them referred to by Hood was confirmed from other sources. A missionary, writing in 1886, said that there were but two kinds of Americans who came to Siam, one to Christianize the natives and the other to liquorize them. Harris noted that, when Americans began to trade in Siam, it was chiefly in whiskey.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the missionaries feared to unfurl the Stars and Stripes because the natives thought it was the sign of a liquor store. American trade at this time was negligible. United States vessels were too large and too expensively manned to compete with German shipping. The United States averaged about eight vessels a year, with an aggregate tonnage well under seven thousand. Nothing was exported directly from the United States to Siam, but everything was transshipped at Singapore or Hong Kong. The Siamese were prejudiced in favor of British goods, not because of their inherent superiority, but because certain of the early American traders in Siam had cheated the Siamese unmercifully. The English had found it irresistible to encourage this prejudice and had spent much money in securing Siamese trade, notably by inviting a Siamese embassy to England and providing for its passage to and from London. The Siamese would have been pleased by a similar invitation to Washington, and the failure to follow up the hints dropped in this connection was probably responsible for the growing coldness of the Siamese Court towards things and persons American. The chief controversy of the 1870's was over the payment of a tax on wood, which came to a head when an American vessel was seized by customs officers and boarded by armed Siamese.<sup>77</sup> In 1882, with the appointment of

John Halderman as both Minister and consul, the United States established a Legation at Bangkok, after which affairs seemed to progress more smoothly than in the early days of the consulate.

The only outstanding event in Siamo-American relations in the closing years of the nineteenth century was the famous Cheek case, which involved not only an important commercial venture but the then burning question of extraterritoriality. The Siamese Government had advanced large sums of money to an American, Dr. M. A. Cheek, to enable him to work extensive teak concessions in the north. In 1892 the Government seized Dr. Cheek's property, claiming that he had failed to carry out the terms on which the money had been loaned, chiefly in regard to paying interest. Cheek contended that this was a violation of treaty rights, and the dispute then begun was terminated only in 1897 when the two interested parties referred the case to the arbitration of Sir Nicholas Hannen, the outstanding authority of the time on extraterritoriality problems. The arbitrator found that in seizing Cheek's property the Siamese Government had violated its treaty with the United States; and as it was not proved that Cheek had defaulted in his agreement, the Government was ordered to pay Tcs. 700,000 to the Cheek estates and also to surrender full rights over the elephants attached to his property in the north. It is hard to see any justification for President Cleveland's optimistic comment that this judgment "cemented forever the traditional friendship and mutual confidence between Siam and the United States";<sup>78</sup> for it certainly made the Siamese more desirous than ever of throwing off the shackles of extraterritoriality.

In the opening years of the twentieth century the American stake in Siam, apart from the mission, was most tenuous. Of the 164 American residents in the country, missionaries represented 95 per cent at this time. Two agencies, one for the Standard Oil Company and another for Singer Sewing Machines, two dentists, and a broker representing American business firms in Siam, made up the rest. The consul, Hamilton King, reported gloomily in November 1902:

There is not in the whole of Siam at present one American house competent to consider a business proposition or a government contract, to

push American trade or represent American interests. Other nationalities are well represented. If trade is sought out by the American consul, the necessary three months' delay before getting a reply jeopardizes American interests. An American business house should be established in Bangkok. . . . Such a house would have an excellent business prospect.<sup>79</sup>

The poor American showing was particularly regrettable in view of the economic boom and rush for concessions that followed the Anglo-Siamese settlement of the peninsula's status in 1909. Fortunately, however, this was also the period when Siam formed the habit of choosing American foreign advisers who have been consistently held in high regard. Their work and that of the missionaries paved the way to more cordial relations.

In 1916 Dr. Heiser's visit heralded the establishment of another altruistic effort, that of the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Siam Department of Health came to be as closely associated with Americans as the field of law was dominated by the French and of education and finance by the British. American commerce continued to be negligible, but American prestige rose high as a result of the disinterested and able services rendered by American advisers and missionaries alike. In the post-war era about forty Siamese were sent to study in the United States; and the Philippines, which were more accessible, became popular for training in scientific agriculture and hygiene. In 1920 the Prince of Kambaeng Bejra went to the United States to study American railroad methods with a view to their application in Siam.

An abortive attempt on the part of American capital to invest in Siamese mining immediately after the war had the unfortunate effect of discouraging an already diffident client. In 1919 the New York Orient Mining Company failed to get a concession largely because Siam, then intent on treaty revision, was using participation in the country's economic development as a bait for the renunciation of extraterritorial privileges. This factor was not negligible in determining America's liberal attitude on this question, as embodied in her treaty of 1921; and the fact that renunciation of extraterritorial rights was made without exacting compensation increased Siam's friendly attitude towards the United States. The next treaty, signed in November 1937, granted full sovereignty to

Siam on the lines of the other treaties negotiated at this time. The only troublesome issue involved was Siam's insistence on having a free hand to declare an oil monopoly, which inevitably affected the interests of the Standard Vacuum Company when it was carried into effect in 1939.

Although the balance of trade has remained consistently favorable to the United States, its volume is very small. Petroleum products, cigarettes, airplanes, motor vehicles, electrical apparatus, canned milk, fish, and iron and steel products account for 75 per cent of United States exports to Siam, excluding the large but indeterminate quantity of American goods transshipped at Hong Kong. Pre-depression shipments from Siam to the United States averaged only \$420,000 annually and consisted principally of gems, teak, and brewers' rice. To foster this trade, the American Government established a branch of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce in Bangkok in 1931 and appointed a commercial attaché to the United States Legation. A reciprocal gesture was the establishment of a Siamese Intelligence Bureau in New York to collect information about American and Canadian trade for Siam. In the fall of 1931, when England went off the gold standard, Siam's treasury funds were placed in American and French banks; and again in 1939 Siam carried on important currency transactions with the United States. Since the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, Siamo-American trade has increased approximately eight-fold.

The interest of the American public in Siam was aroused by the successive visits of Prajadhipok to the United States for medical treatment. From time to time an American squadron visits Siam, but nothing like so often as do the Japanese, British, and French. In 1931 the Governor of the Philippines returned a former visit paid by Prajadhipok to those islands, and the goodwill so often spoken of on those occasions seemed genuine. Siamo-American relations have enjoyed a history of almost unparalleled cordiality. The absence of political bones of contention and of large-scale economic stakes in the country is the basis of this persistent friendship, which has been strengthened by a record of disinterested public service. At the present writing, however, the United States' insistence on maintaining the *status quo* in the Far East, and her action

in holding the bombers ordered by Siam in Manila, have considerably lowered American prestige at Bangkok.

#### THE NETHERLANDS

In the opening years of the seventeenth century Dutch ships and merchants began to visit Siam. Dutch factories were established at Pattani in 1602 and at Ayuthia in 1604. Four years later, as a consequence of the Netherlands' success against Spain, the Siamese sent an embassy to the Dutch post at Bantam and later to Prince Maurice of the Netherlands. Holland's original interest in Siam, like that of the rest of Europe, was as a depot for the China trade; but eventually she became involved in Ayuthia's commerce for its own sake. Dutch artisans, shipwrights, and carpenters entered the service of the king of Siam, to whom the Dutch gave guns and aid in his chronic wars with Cambodia.<sup>80</sup> The art of modern shipbuilding was introduced at Ayuthia by the Dutch.

The Dutch weathered Portuguese opposition in Siam only to find themselves confronted by the more serious rivalry of the British, who had been at Ayuthia since 1612. The Dutch and the British carried their European disputes to Siam, and the king ignored them so long as they were confined to Pattani. But he took active measures to keep order when their antagonism took the form of sea fights near the capital.<sup>81</sup>

In 1632 and again in 1634 the Dutch aided the king of Siam in his expeditions against Pattani in return for the grant of the hides monopoly. Although these campaigns were military failures, the king remitted half the sum paid by the Dutch for the privilege of trading in that troubled kingdom. The king's favor was fickle, however, and varied according to Dutch successes in Malaysia. In 1636, in retaliation for the complaints of the Government of Batavia over a rice cargo of poor quality, he sentenced to be trampled to death two of the Dutch agents at Ayuthia. Although this gruesome sentence was not carried out, the king nevertheless forced the Dutch to sign an agreement of unquestioning obedience to the Phraklang's orders. Again in 1639 the king ordered all the Dutch to leave his country within a day under pain of death, but he soon forgot all about the order when he received a letter from the Prince of Orange containing unusual marks of respect.



In the Siamese expeditions against Singora in 1648-54, the Dutch received insults and threats when they informed the king that because of hostilities in Europe they could spare no more ships to aid him. However, this did not undermine friendly relations for long, as the Dutch were then dominant in the peninsula. By a display of force in 1649 they improved their already advantageous position in Siamese trade. Presents were regularly exchanged between Ayuthia and Batavia, particularly after Phra Narai ascended the throne in 1656.

Five years later a radical change took place. The Dutch were then at war with the Portuguese; and in the course of the struggle they captured a Portuguese junk bearing merchandise belonging to the king of Siam, who claimed a large indemnity. Everything at this time seemed to turn against the Dutch. In 1662 the English reopened their Ayuthia factory, and simultaneously Phaulkon's rise to power was militating against Dutch interests. The following year the Dutch company made one of its periodical withdrawals from Siam on the ground that the king had violated his agreement with the Netherlands, but in reality because both the English and the Dutch realized that Siam's commerce was not worth trade wars. Siam, torn between fears of Dutch bullying and regret at the loss of Dutch trade, sent an embassy to Bantam asking that friendly relations be restored.

The Dutch conquest of the Celebes in 1664 caused the prince of the Macassars to seek refuge in Siam, and his turbulent presence was a recurrent and unpleasant reminder to Phra Narai of the power of the Dutch.<sup>82</sup> In an attempt to neutralize Dutch power, he offered Pattani as a concession to their English rivals. The cautious English sent an agent to report on the situation and, finding Pattani engaged in one of its usual wars, turned down the offer.

In the meantime the Dutch had forced through a very advantageous treaty with Phra Narai, whereby they obtained a monopoly of both tin and hides and of the carrying trade to Japan, as well as extraterritorial privileges—an important turning point in the history of Siam's foreign relations. At first the treaty worked to Dutch satisfaction; but soon the wily king, by controlling prices, managed to rob the Dutch of almost all their newly won advantages. To neutralize the effects of this move, the king asked the

Governor of Batavia to send him Dutch artisans, engineers, and mariners, who would be willing to live in his kingdom and instruct his people.

By 1672 conditions in Siam were once more unsettled, and English competition presented an increasingly serious obstacle. The Dutch, however, were not wholly eclipsed even during Phra Narai's pro-French period; and the treaty of 1685 safeguarded their tin and hide monopolies. After the 1688 holocaust of foreign influence, the Dutch phoenix rose from the ashes less damaged than its French and British rivals. All existing contracts were confirmed by the new king; and until the first years of the eighteenth century the Dutch had things very much their own way.

The next swing in the pendulum of Siamese trade found the Dutch in 1705 once more disposed to close their factories. Both sides were to blame. The Siamese did not adhere to their treaty arrangements with the Dutch, and the Dutch company was badly served by dishonest and incompetent agents who offered prices below market value. However, it was decided to keep the Dutch factory open in view of Batavia's dependence on Siamese rice; and intercourse continued spasmodically for half a century more despite open fights between Dutch and Siamese and Amsterdam's repeated advice in favor of permanent withdrawal. Even the Burmese invasions that destroyed the Dutch factory at Ayuthia did not wholly discourage Batavia, whose Governor sent cannon to Phya Tak for his war against the Burmese invaders in 1770. But Siam was too much concerned with local problems to relish foreign trade, and the Dutch apparently forgot about Siam until the mid-nineteenth century. When Bowring visited Siam in 1856, he found no trace of the Dutch trade that had once flourished there.

A Dutch envoy following in Bowring's wake negotiated a replica of the latter's treaty in 1860, but this failed to revive the old relations. Not until the early twentieth century did a marked change occur. The Dutch then began to import Siamese sugar, molasses, rice, and wood; and the Siamese to buy Dutch manufactured goods. As a result of Chulalongkorn's visits to Java, a Dutch expert, Homan van der Heide, was employed to plan an irrigation system for the Menam valley.

In recent years Siam's trade with the Netherlands Indies has

undergone a remarkable change. Siam imports about Tcs. 12,000,000 worth of sugar and mineral oils in addition to tea and fruit and sells far less to Java because of the small demand for imported rice and the high duties there. Direct imports are, of course, small compared with transshipments at Singapore and Penang.

In 1931 a Holland-Siam Society, with Dutch and Bangkok branches, was founded to promote friendly and cultural relations. Just prior to the European war there were registered at the Netherlands Legation at Bangkok about 50 European Dutch, and approximately 100 Chinese and 4,500 Javanese and Malayan Dutch subjects. For a brief time a somewhat intransigent attitude on the part of Holland in exercising extraterritorial rights over her protégés caused a certain amount of bad feeling, but recent treaties have largely smoothed matters over.

#### PORTUGAL

After Albuquerque captured Malacca in 1511, he decided to square accounts with Siam, which, he learned, had vague claims on Malaya. Accordingly, he allowed the Chinese junks then at Malacca to depart for Canton, provided that they carried to a Siamese port his envoy to Ayuthia, Duarte Fernandez. This first European to visit Siam was well received by the king, who preferred to remain on good terms with the new conquerors rather than assert his dubious sovereignty over the obstreperous Malays, especially as he was already pre-occupied with wars against his neighbors to the east, west, and north.

In reply to the king's congratulatory message, Albuquerque dispatched by the overland route a second envoy, Antonio Miranda de Azavedo, who was the first of the European explorers of southern Siam. However, beyond the fact that the journey was taken in 1512, there is no record of it.<sup>83</sup> In 1516 a third envoy, Suarte de Coelho, concluded a treaty between Siam and Albuquerque by which the Portuguese gained the right to reside and trade in Ayuthia, Tenasserim, Mergui, Pattani, and Ligor; and the Siamese even permitted the newcomers to practise their religion and to erect a wooden cross in a prominent place in the capital.<sup>84</sup> Not until 1606, however, did the first Portuguese missionary, the Jesuit Balthazar de Sequeira, arrive at Ayuthia.

From Malacca, Albuquerque sent an exploratory fleet to the Moluccas and along the coast of the Indo-China peninsula in search of loot and trade. It was not until the coming of the Spaniards, who threatened the Portuguese trade monopoly, that the race to annex territory began. In 1516 Manuel Falcao established a trading post at Pattani, which flourished so mightily that by 1540 there were three hundred Portuguese living there, from among whom the adventurer Antonio de Faria was able to recruit men to harry the surrounding coasts.

To Siam itself the Portuguese also came in large numbers. They had no territorial ambitions there but served in the king's army, teaching his men the arts of cannon foundry and musketry and the building of modern fortifications. So apt were the Siamese as pupils that they were later able to send gifts of firearms to the Japanese Shogun. Unfortunately for the Siamese, however, all the nations of the Indo-China peninsula recognized the power of the Portuguese. For fifty years the kings of Ava and Ayuthia bid against each other for Portuguese aid, offering as inducements towns like Martaban and Arakan, over neither of which did these generous sovereigns then exercise any control. But the services of the Portuguese in Siam were also rewarded with more practical residential and commercial privileges. Portuguese mariners often sought refuge in Siamese ports during the northeast monsoon when the China Sea was dangerous to navigate.

Portugal's trade and intercourse with Siam progressed for about a hundred years. Portuguese junks, built at Ayuthia, were used to transport Siamese cargoes to Malacca, where they were transhipped to Portuguese vessels bound for Lisbon. In 1620 the king of Siam's offer of a Siamese port to the Portuguese was refused by the Governor of Goa. Ten years later the Siamese quarreled with the Portuguese colony because some of its members had seized a Dutch ship in Siamese waters. From then until King Songtam's death in 1628, hostility marked their relationship; the Portuguese seizure of Siamese boats at sea and a subsequent blockade of the Menam had provoked retaliations by Songtam against Portuguese junks and crews on the Menam.

In 1633 friendly relations were resumed; but the coming of rival European powers soon awakened Portuguese hostility and altered

their relations with Siam. The Dutch came in 1604, and the English in 1612; and in 1631 the king sent an embassy to the Spanish Philippines. Portuguese efforts to maintain their ascendancy by sowing discord between their rivals and between them and the Siamese only temporarily checked the decline of their influence.

Portugal's legacy to Siam included contributions to the art of war and a large group of half-castes, who are very proud of their Portuguese origin. The Portuguese Government had encouraged the marriage of their adventurers to native women with a view to increasing the number of Portuguese and Christians in the countries to which they went. Their descendants in Siam do not forgive Europeans who mistake them for Siamese—an error that is almost impossible to avoid in view of their complete assimilation in the matter of language and dress.<sup>85</sup> During the reign of Phya Tak they were the only Europeans left in Siam. The Siamese called them, and all Europeans after them, *farang*, after the Indian name for all Occidentals.

In 1817 the Governor of Macao sent a letter to the king of Siam in which he asked for the re-establishment of friendly relations between Siam and Portugal. Unfortunately the envoy who delivered the letter became so upset by the behavior of the people that he left the country without waiting for a reply.<sup>86</sup> The letter, however, was answered favorably because the Portuguese had promised firearms, which Siam badly needed at that time. A consul, Silveira, was appointed to take charge of the old factory. The Siamo-Portuguese treaty of 1818 was never ratified, however, because Goa found several of its clauses objectionable. Nevertheless, the consul stayed on in uneasy favor and was given a Siamese title. He served as the invaluable intermediary between European envoys and missionaries and the Court.

In the seventeenth century Portugal's trade had soon been eclipsed by that of the other Europeans who followed in her wake, and the same situation was reproduced in the nineteenth century. In 1859 a new Siamo-Portuguese treaty confirmed the right to appoint a consul; but it was not until 1900 that a revival of Portuguese commercial activity took place as a result of the enterprise of a remarkable consul, S. C. da Silva, who settled some long-standing questions with the Siamese Government, improved his Legation

grounds, and launched a commercial syndicate with Tcs. 20,000 capital, which he raised among Portuguese residents in Bangkok and from the Siamese Government. Through this company it was hoped to import Portuguese wines and provisions into Siam, but its success was mediocre.

Nowadays Siam exports rice and teak to Portugal, and especially to her African colonies. This commerce is capable of expansion; in 1937 it was valued at Tcs. 1,588,911, or 0.86 per cent of Siam's total export trade. The number of Portuguese European residents registered at the consulate in 1935 was ninety-one.

#### BELGIUM

Seventy-two years of untarnished friendship have marked Siam's relations with Belgium. The first Siamo-Belgian treaty was signed at the outset of Chulalongkorn's reign. Belgians were given extra-territorial and property rights in Siam, as well as religious and commercial freedom; and the Belgian Minister to China was accredited to Bangkok, which he visited from time to time. In 1905 Belgium opened a Legation in the Siamese capital, and as a return courtesy Siam accredited to Brussels her Ministers to London and Paris alternately.

In 1891 Chulalongkorn was anxious to modernize his State and to steer a safe course between the French Scylla and the British Charybdis. He therefore selected a Belgian lawyer, Rolin-Jacquemyns, as his adviser in foreign affairs. Rolin-Jacquemyns had been liberal deputy from Ghent and Minister of Defense and was the founder of the Institute of International Law. He and the remarkable Belgian collaborators he brought with him served Siam ably for thirty-seven years.

Rolin-Jacquemyns regarded his role as that of savior of Siamese independence.<sup>87</sup> By giving Siam a consciousness of her national rights, he laid the foundations of her present-day policy of an impeccable legality in international dealings. In gratitude, Chulalongkorn gave him the title of Chao Phya and the privilege, unique for a European, of membership in the Council of Regency during the king's absence. Siam's loyalty to his memory is shown by a commemorative statue placed in the Bangkok Law School in 1927.

In 1926 Belgium followed other European nations in renounc-

ing extraterritorial rights, and a subsequent exchange of royal visits confirmed the traditional cordiality. A number of Siamese students in 1939 were studying at the University of Liège and in the military school at Brussels. Phya Devahastin, former commander of the Siamese Expeditionary Force, was once a student of the latter; and it is there that Luang Bipul before the first world war had decided to send his son for training.

In 1913 a group of Belgian financiers bought the major share of Danish stock in the Siam Electric Company and founded the Bangkok Tramways. Engineers followed on the capitalists' heels and developed these companies in a remarkable manner. Apart from the Siam Electric Company, Belgian capital is now practically limited to the Société Anonyme Belge.

In the last thirty years Belgium has furnished much of the material that the Siamese Government has required for electrical stations, tramway lines, and railroads; and the Brussels Mint has turned out many nickel and bronze coins for Siam. Belgium exports diamonds, arms, munitions, paints, and glassware to Siam; and Siamese exports of raw materials to Belgium range from Tcs. 1,500,000 to Tcs. 2,300,000 annually. Since the Siam-Belgian exchange comes to less than 1 per cent of Siam's total volume of trade, only sentimental ties justify the continued existence of a Belgian Legation. There are eighteen Belgians registered there.

#### DENMARK

In 1616 the Danish East India Company was founded; and a few years later a handful of Danes sailed from Ceylon to Tenasserim, where they traded for a brief interval before pressing on to Ayuthia. There they received only a trading permit, which was sparingly used, and did not enjoy treaty rights or build a factory as did their European rivals. They continued to trade in the peninsula, particularly at Mergui.

When, on the occasion of a visit to Siam in 1899 by Prince Valdemar of Denmark, English papers expressed surprise that the Danes bulked so large in Siam's foreign community, the Bangkok press went out of its way to praise the Danes' remarkable activity during the preceding forty years.<sup>88</sup>

The Siamese navy was largely the creation of Danish officers,

notably the *Commodore de Richelieu*, who also became a Siamese Minister and manager of the Siamese king's vast European investments. He also handled the Danish royal family's capital, which he invested in local shipping, railroads, and mines. The only line of steamers running directly between Bangkok and Europe belonged to the Danish East Asiatic Company, which also owned a fleet of ships for the coastwise traffic. The Danish East Asiatic Company was incorporated with the Russian East Asiatic Company at Riga, and the Russian Minister at Bangkok acted as consul for Denmark. A Danish company supplied Bangkok for many years with electric light and tramway service and had a share in the timber trade.

The treaty concluded between Siam and Denmark in 1913 closely resembled the Anglo-Siamese agreement of 1909, with the important difference that in return for surrendering extraterritorial rights Denmark received no special concessions. Although Siam-Danish trade was small, it was hoped that this new treaty would bring an extension of Danish investment in Siam. The Siamese thought that foreign capital might have fewer strings attached if it came from a small, neutral power, which would be unlikely to follow up commercial advantages by demanding a political foothold in the country.

The number of Danes now in Siam is about 160, which gives them third place numerically in Bangkok's European community. Many Siamese officials have received their education in Denmark, notably Phya Bahol, who speaks Danish fluently. Danes continue to hold a prominent place in the political and commercial life of Siam.

#### SWITZERLAND

King Chulalongkorn's visit to Berne in 1897 was not returned until thirty-three years later, when the Swiss Minister to Tokyo came to Bangkok to negotiate a commercial treaty in 1930.

Although trade relations between the two countries date back fifty-eight years, Swiss interests have always been handled by other legations. Until 1916 both the German and French Legations accepted the registration of the twenty persons then composing the Swiss colony in Siam, but after Siam's entry into the war the work was taken over by the United States. In 1930 a treaty was signed



between Switzerland and Siam, but the interminable delays and open indifference with which the negotiations were conducted by the Siamese showed the small importance they attached to Swiss trade.

Beyond establishing a consulate, the treaty did little to change the position of the Swiss in Siam, who now number thirty-seven. For years Switzerland's excellent schools and invigorating climate have attracted Siamese students, particularly to the Universities of Berne and Zurich; and a new interest in the country has developed since it became the chosen residence of young King Ananda.

#### ITALY

Although Siam-Italian relations have been negligible, considerable reluctance was shown by Italy in 1925 over the renunciation of the extraterritorial rights that she had acquired by a treaty of the Bowring type in 1868.

In the old days Italians dominated the Fine Arts Department of Bangkok and served as architects in Europeanizing the buildings of the capital. Colonel Gerini was the most remarkable of the Italian advisers to the Siamese Government. He came officially as a military instructor but served his adopted country far more effectually as a scholar whose writings on Siamese history and archaeology helped to make Siam better known and understood abroad.

Owing to the fascist tinge of Siam's present Government, Italy has shown a sympathetic interest in this distant colleague. In 1934 a cultural mission of forty-two Fascists arrived in Siam on a visit of friendship and goodwill sponsored by the Italian Naval League, to which some of the 134 members of the Italian colony in Bangkok belong. In 1937 a group of Siamese aviators visited the aviation exhibit at Milan. In addition to Siam's regular shipments of tin and rubber to Italy, the placing of important orders for warships with Italian shipyards has stimulated trade between the two countries, which the application of sanctions in 1935 only mildly interrupted.

The Italian treaty of 1937 reproduced the general lines of the other treaties negotiated at the same time. One recent variation in the even tenor of Siam-Italian relations has been the application for admittance to Siam of a number of Italian Jews.<sup>89</sup>

## SPAIN

The Spaniards claim to have sent missionaries to Siam as early as 1583; and fifteen years later Don Tello de Aguirre came from Manila to make a treaty of friendship and commerce with Siam. This was the second treaty that Siam made with a European power.

Unfortunately for the cordial development of Siamo-Spanish relations, the Spaniards backed the Khmers in the peninsular wars and were therefore not welcome at Ayuthia. They did, however, carry on a desultory trade with Siam in the seventeenth century, when it is recorded that some of their ships were seized by the Siamese along with those of the Portuguese in 1631.

In 1717 Spanish commissioners were sent from the Philippines to establish a trading post in Siam; and in spite of the current unpopularity of Europeans in Siam, they were welcomed, especially as they represented themselves as a royal embassy. This auspicious beginning was undone the following year when a Siamese embassy to Manila was not treated with the respect it felt was its due. As a result, the whole relationship lapsed and was not resumed until 1870 when a Bowring-inspired treaty was negotiated between Spain and Siam. This, however, did not result in the establishment of a consulate; and the twenty-two Spaniards now residing in Bangkok are served by the Danish consul. In 1939 a new treaty was negotiated.

## RUSSIA

The relations of Siam with Russia have been intermittent. In 1891 the Tsarevitch visited Siam and was met at the Menam bar by a magnificent escort in the most colorful Siamese manner. The whole visit was a great success. It gave the Siamese a chance to impress the Westerners; and the Russians for their part were most gratifyingly astonished at finding Siam so different from the crude jungle-land that they had imagined. This occasion preceded by eight years the conclusion of a treaty between Siam and Russia—the last one to be negotiated on the Bowring pattern. Before the war, some Siamese officers went to Russia for their military training.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 abrogated the existing treaty,

and diplomatic relations have not been resumed. In fact, the Siamese have acquired a dread of the Communist activities that have taken place so near their frontiers in Indo-China and southern China. The strong stand taken against Communism by the constitutional régime in the spring of 1933 has been maintained ever since despite changes in the administration. For her part, the Soviet Union regards Siam as a base for future Japanese aggression in south-eastern Asia. In 1941 a Siamese envoy to Moscow paved the way for a resumption of diplomatic relations.

#### EXTRATERRITORIALITY

The history of Siam's recent foreign relations has been the history of her efforts to free herself from foreign domination, and the Government of Bangkok has learned in the European school how to play one power off against another. The early history of Siam was so involved with tribal struggles and wars with neighbors that there was no time to give to the development of foreign relations through commerce. Foreigners in Siam were treated with a cordiality that was unique among contemporary States; but it was upon the king's personality that the degree of protection, or otherwise, that was given to aliens depended. In the seventeenth century both the English and Dutch abandoned their commercial attempts because time and again strife brought trade to a standstill. The expulsion of the French led to a distrust of all Europeans; and later, the Burmese invasions and the sack of Ayuthia combined to cut Siam off from world currents.

In the nineteenth century political conditions became more settled, and a king came to the throne who recognized the necessity of Siam's voluntary participation in world affairs. This involved endowing the State with modern communications and a revised legal code because of the increasing number of foreigners in the land. These foreigners demanded protection of their persons and property in a manner satisfactory to them.

As a result of sustained efforts lasting half a century, Siam finally succeeded in bringing all foreigners under her full jurisdiction on the condition that the law codes were revised and administered in accordance with legal principles that foreigners would recognize. Thus Siam's internal history, as well as that of her foreign trade,

was involved in the history of extraterritorial rights, which lasted throughout the entire period when she was modernizing herself.

Although extraterritoriality had its roots in the seventeenth century and possibly even earlier, it did not become a burning issue until late in the nineteenth century. It is curious that in the early days extraterritoriality involved privileges that the Siamese were very willing to give away as it spared them onerous responsibilities. It was, roughly, a system under which various national groups were allowed to live in camps, each under the leadership of a man of their choice, who must also be approved by the king of Siam. He kept order among his own people, for whom he was collectively responsible to the Siamese authorities. Although a foreigner, he was regarded as a Siamese functionary, as his title *nai amphur* indicated; he had no relation with his own home Government and was in every respect under Siamese jurisdiction. There were three principal groups of foreign residents in Siam at this time—Asiatic merchants, European merchants, and European missionaries.

#### *European Merchants in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*

European traders in the Far East never ceased to demand that their own laws and customs should be observed in the countries they visited; and in these demands they were backed by their chartered companies. Siam, with her traditional tolerance, recognized that her Manu-inspired law was not necessarily suited to foreign merchants, who, incidentally, differed radically among themselves as to laws and customs. A logical solution was found in assigning land to each group to be organized into a camp under their chosen leader who would exercise police powers over his own people and also serve as liaison officer with the Siamese Government through a specially appointed official, the Phraklang. The Siamese Government respected this jurisdiction so completely that one offending Englishman who fired off guns in his own factory was not arrested by the Siamese until he came some time later to the palace.<sup>90</sup>

The Phraklang was Minister of Commerce to the king, whose commercial monopoly involved this Ministry in foreign affairs through the increasing contacts with other nations. The Phraklang became the mediator, protector, and judge of foreigners. The fact that foreigners, with the exception of missionaries, were allowed

to travel little in the country meant that the law applied to them was one confined in space. Only later, when foreigners began to travel, did the idea develop that they took their own law with them and escaped local jurisdiction wherever they went.

The earliest treaty referring distinctly to extraterritoriality was made in 1664 between Siam and the Dutch East India Company. Its chief object was to grant the Dutch certain trading monopolies, but a clause was added giving them extraterritorial privileges in criminal law even in the case of crimes committed by them against Siamese.

The second treaty, negotiated by Chaumont in 1685, dealt with civil as well as criminal law and contained the provision that French servants of the East India Company, as well as all other French citizens not in Siamese service, should be judged by the head of the company. A third treaty, however, negotiated by La Loubère in 1687, gave the chief officer of the company full jurisdiction in civil and criminal disputes only in cases where the company's servants were involved; those not in the company came under Siamese jurisdiction, with the head of the company retaining a vote in the final decision. Authorities on extraterritoriality find this provision—that the French captain should sit with the Siamese judges when a French national was the defendant—an interesting forerunner of the later international courts, where the captain's role was assumed by the consul.<sup>91</sup> Before the Loubère treaty could be ratified, however, the outbreak of the Siamese revolution voided all these arrangements. Only the Dutch salvaged their privileges, which were confirmed in 1688.

In this way the relations between Siam and Europe, which started in the sixteenth century, showed a very marked development in the seventeenth century through a transplantation of the principles of extraterritoriality already long established in European practice. Already it so modified Siamese jurisdiction that the developments of the nineteenth century were foreshadowed before the revolution of 1688. Their evolution, which might normally have been expected in the eighteenth century, had to be deferred for a hundred years owing to internal warfare and invasions.

Non-resident merchants had a different status. Since the Portuguese, and after them the Dutch from Malacca, leased land for

their factories in Pattani, their contact with Siamese jurisdiction was indirect. There was no change in the status of non-resident merchants until the English leased Penang from another Siamese vassal, the Sultan of Kedah; but this was an extra-legal transaction and was not recognized by the Siamese until 1831, when extradition first made its appearance in a local treaty.

### *Missionaries*

The French missionaries first negotiated treaty rights in 1685. They were granted permission to preach freely, and their converts were guaranteed freedom of worship. The missionaries were entitled to their own tribunals; and this privilege was extended to the converts they made even among the Siamese, who were also relieved of certain personal services that they would normally have owed. Missionaries and their flocks followed the national grouping of the merchants and lived in the same camp organization under their bishop. The latter was responsible, either directly or through an appointee, to a special Siamese official charged with mission cases, who might judge certain cases jointly in the episcopal court.

This arrangement was much more complicated than that made with the merchants, since it contained elements of special jurisdiction and mixed courts for both Europeans and Asiatics. However, the mission was able to struggle along throughout the eighteenth century when the Franco-Siamese treaties had technically become a dead letter; and the Christians maintained their camp organization under the headship of their bishop despite increased interference from the civil powers.<sup>92</sup> In the nineteenth century the mission entered upon a new period of prosperity. It has always enjoyed a different legal status from that of the other foreign missions in Siam and is the only mission that has left its trace upon Siamese law.

### *Nineteenth Century*

In the treaty that Captain Burney succeeded in arranging with Siam in 1826, there was no provision made for a British consulate at Bangkok or for extraterritorial rights. Seven years later Siam concluded a treaty with the United States that was like its British predecessor in stipulating that American merchants trading in Siam

should obey that country's laws. Elements of a bankruptcy system were also contained in this treaty.

These two treaties were the last to be made before consular jurisdiction was established in Siam. They were negotiated between equals, without surrender of sovereignty on either side; and they show that the germs of extraterritoriality that had existed in the seventeenth century treaties had now lapsed. However, these treaties did not help trade, as had been their objective, but only served as a basis for future negotiations.

With the accession of the modern-minded king Mongkut, Bowring was able to convince the Siamese Government that the greatest handicap to foreign trade was that European resident merchants were unwilling to come under Siamese jurisdiction and wanted consular protection under their own laws. The modified extraterritoriality established in his treaty of 1855 was based on a distinction between civil and criminal cases but was in practice developed into full juridical extraterritoriality. According to this treaty, if both parties or the defendant were British subjects, the cases came under consular jurisdiction. Even in the Siamese courts, when a British subject was plaintiff, his consul might attend. The British were permitted to trade freely in all Siamese seaports but could reside only in Bangkok or its suburbs.

The Bowring Treaty, with its supplementary agreement, was not only the key treaty to extraterritoriality; but it served as a model for all successive treaties until the treaty with the Indian Government in 1874. After that, the extraterritorial rights granted to Russia and Japan were on different terms. The three principal Bowring-type treaties—with Great Britain in 1855, with France in 1856, and with the United States in 1857—required in order to carry out their commercial regulations a complete set of harbor laws, which were enacted in 1857. Other countries to follow in this wake were Denmark in 1858; Portugal in 1859; the Netherlands in 1860; Norway, Sweden, Belgium, and Italy in 1868; Austria-Hungary in 1869; and Spain in 1870. With the exception of the Russian treaty of 1899, the Spanish treaty marked the last big surrender of extraterritoriality; thereafter Siam strove to reduce foreigners' privileges in her country.

All these treaties were not isolated agreements but chain treaties,

made in the comparatively short period of fifteen years and exemplifying the most-favored-nation clause. Extraterritorial rights, which were extended to most Europeans, were specified under the principal headings of the right to enter, reside, and trade in the community; the right to immunity from the country's laws and courts; freedom of worship; inviolability of domicile; and certain tax exemptions, notably in the application of Siamese laws of inheritance. In these treaties can be seen the differences in the privileges accorded to the Asiatic subjects or protégés of a European power as compared with those granted to its own nationals. The interests of certain countries were represented through another legation. The subjects of non-treaty powers, such as China, were under Siamese laws, which showed that extraterritoriality was not regarded as a foreigner's natural right but as an exceptional favor granted on a treaty basis.

By 1874 the pendulum was beginning to swing back towards a curtailment of foreigners' privileges. The great number of Bowring-type treaties, involving as they did a growth of consular jurisdiction, made a rapid and radical modification of the situation unlikely. But the swift-moving change in the situation of northern Siam forced the issue.

There the numbers of British Burmese and Indian subjects were increasing in a region where the British consul was hardly accessible, and the situation necessitated finding some new expedient. The treaty between Siam and the Government of India, signed only four years after the last treaty of the Bowring type, tried to find a way out of the northern difficulty. It provided for special jurisdiction for British subjects in the three northern provinces, which was aimed specifically at the prevention and punishment of crime, especially dacoity, along the Burmese frontier. A modified system of extradition was set up, and no extraterritorial rights were given to the dacoit class of criminal.

The basis of the International Court, which played such an important role in the later treaties of 1883 and 1909, was laid down in the disposition of civil suits at this time. An authorized representative of the king of Siam was appointed in Chiangmai for regional cases between British subjects and Siamese. British subjects refusing the jurisdiction of Siamese courts could take their cases



to the British consul at Bangkok or in Burma. This experiment, though born of necessity, was nevertheless a tribute to the progress that Siamese legislation had made and was successful enough to be confirmed in the next treaty, which even extended its application.

The treaty of 1883, abrogating that of 1874, provided for a British consulate at Chiangmai and established a new juridical system called the International Court, which extended to all British subjects in the three northern provinces in both civil and criminal matters. Siamese law was applied by a Siamese court with the participation of the British consul, who could transfer any case to his own court should he so wish. This provision, potentially wounding to Siamese pride, was so tactfully handled by the British representatives that it was later extended to eight other northern provinces and was incorporated into the French treaty of 1904 and the Italian and Dutch treaties of 1905.

The year 1883 saw the beginning of another series of agreements between Siam and the powers in regard to the liquor trade. In general the duty was thereby raised from the universal 3 per cent *ad valorem* to a duty not exceeding 10 per cent. A German commentary on these agreements pointed out cynically that the concession made by the powers was probably due to the fear that the unlimited use of liquor would diminish the already small purchasing power of the Siamese masses. On the Siamese side it more commendably showed an awakening interest in questions affecting public health.

Between 1883 and 1898 there were no treaties made concerning juridical matters, although the territorial concessions to France in 1893 and the Franco-British guarantee of the Menam basin had an immense influence on the development of extraterritorial issues. A distinct advance from the legal viewpoint was embodied in the protocol to the Siamo-Japanese treaty of 1898. Although it granted consular jurisdiction to a country formerly not so privileged, yet for the first time there was formal recognition that extraterritoriality was not a permanent institution but a temporary expedient pending the completion of Siam's judicial reforms. While it may be argued that the treaty subsequently concluded with Russia was a return to the Bowring-type treaty and therefore a backward step, none the less by the end of the century Siam was clearly and

actively anticipating the reassertion of her jurisdiction over the foreigners within her gates.

At the turn of the century the registration aspect of extraterritoriality put in its troublesome appearance as a result of Britain's encroachments to the west and France's to the east. As early as 1896 it was apparent to observers that the registration regulations were giving more than legitimate scope to consular interference.<sup>93</sup> What had been originally intended for the protection of Europeans was being extended to the rapidly increasing Asiatic subjects of the major colonial powers. The Chinese were particularly adroit in obtaining registration under false pretenses by faking certificates in order to gain certain tax exemptions and such other privileges as the inviolability of domicile.

Criminals often produced registration certificates, which prevented their being tried in a Siamese court. The checking of the register of its nationals and subjects was the concern of the individual consulate, and the Siamese Government could do nothing about the matter. The first attempt to remedy this state of affairs was the agreement between Siam and Great Britain in 1899, which for the first time defined the classes of British subjects entitled to registration. Under this treaty, if the validity of a registration certificate was questioned, a joint committee of Siamese and English was empowered to decide upon it. As was so often the case with the Siam-British agreements, the terms of this treaty were duplicated by other nations with the notable exception of Portugal, whose numerous subjects in Siam were always a thorny problem to the Siamese Government.

### *Twentieth Century*

The French proved to be the worst offenders as regards promiscuous registration, and the two treaties of 1904 and 1907 resulted in important modifications of the judicial régime established by earlier treaties. The treaty of 1904 was never ratified, but that of 1907 went much further in extending Siamese jurisdiction over French Asiatic subjects and protégés registered at the French Legation after the date of the treaty's promulgation. Only in the north-eastern provinces of Udorn and Isarn were French international courts to be provisionally retained pending the completion of the

Siamese codes. France further required that judgments from the Court of Appeals in cases originating in the International Courts should bear the signature of two European judges—the first legal reference to foreigners as advisers or judges in Siamese service. The very real concessions embodied in this treaty were a tribute to Siam's inflexible perseverance and were applied to a large and ever-growing section of the community—France's Asiatic subjects. But Siam's pride was still somewhat ruffled because the principle of her total sovereignty was not recognized by the extension of her jurisdiction to Europeans as well.

In 1909 the British negotiated the most important treaty since that of Bowring. It duplicated the French agreement in regard to those registered before 1909, who thus remained under the jurisdiction of the International Court. But it outdistanced the French treaty in placing all other British subjects, whether Oriental or Occidental, under Siamese jurisdiction. In either case, whenever a British subject was involved, a European legal adviser was to be present in the court of first instance; and appeals from either tribunal were to bear the signature of two European judges. International courts were to expire upon promulgation of the codes then in preparation. Despite the many restrictions of a novel and rather ambiguous nature, the blanket provision placing all British subjects under Siamese jurisdiction marked a great advance in the direction that Siam was anxious to go.

In spite of the decline of consular jurisdiction effected by these two treaties, new negotiations were required to free Siam from the remainder of her judicial shackles, especially the tariff constraint upon her fiscal autonomy. Thus, under the existing arrangement, the Siamese Government could not compel a full declaration of exports by foreign companies; and certain health measures and pawnshop regulations were indefinitely held up by the reluctance of individual consuls to concede the application of Siamese laws to their own nationals. Moreover, the completion of Siam's codes was not sufficient in itself to remove the consular right of avocation automatically.

Siam's assertion of her rights might long have remained unsatisfied had it not been for the realization on the part of the powers that the Siamese Government was not going to open the country

wholly to foreign trade and capital unless it could control them. The chief pleas for treaty revision in the 1920's were advanced along such lines of enlightened self-interest.

Moreover, there was another consideration that bolstered the revisionists' stand. The division of legal authority in the country's jurisdiction made for a lack of real control. Consuls were not trained to administer civil or criminal law; and in matters of perjury, for example, they had no control over witnesses who were either natives or protégés of another country. In certain other cases also both foreigners and Siamese slipped through loopholes in the other's law as a result of such difficulties as the impossibility of penalizing contempt of court.

Nor was extraterritoriality giving complete satisfaction from the viewpoint of foreign residents. The penalties inflicted often outraged that community's sense of justice. Since the Siamese police could not search foreigners' houses or even arrest them, anarchy and disorder increased notably throughout the country. Often the nearest foreign official lived miles away from the scene of the crime, and this meant great expenditure of time and money for the plaintiff. Some consuls sent their subjects out of Siam to be tried in their native countries, and this was not only an expensive procedure but tended to make foreigners still further disregard and disrespect the native law. The keen competition then existing among the different foreigners in Siam was a further impediment in the way of achieving judicial impartiality under such a system. Consuls were either frankly partial to their own nationals or unjust towards them in their desire not to be accused of patriotic bias.

After the war it was but logical that President Wilson's country should be the first to give Siam the equal rights he had promised, without compensation or secret understandings of any sort. The American treaty was rapidly negotiated and signed in December 1920, but thereafter came a long pause during which Siamese diplomacy had to deal with many different and successive obstacles. The preamble to the American treaty stated that its revision was based on principles of equity, and that generally speaking the citizens of both countries were placed on an equal footing. The right of consular evocation was to survive only five years after the completion of the codes, during which period appeal to the Dika

Those enjoying full extraterritorial rights, such as American citizens, were placed under the laws of their country and therefore could not benefit by Siam's Mining Act, for example. Moreover, this category of foreigners could not live permanently in Siam, or own property there, or travel without special permit beyond the twenty-four-hour zone around Bangkok—a region that possessed no mines. In most cases a six months' passport was granted, but in 1919 this was not done in the case of a New York mining company seeking a peninsular concession.

The second class of foreigner in Siam consisted of the British and French, who had partially surrendered extraterritorial rights and could therefore benefit by the Mining Act. It is true that under the absolute monarchy occasional inconsistencies were permitted in the allocation of mining rights; thus the refusal of a Japanese and an American offer were immediately followed by the granting of extensive concessions to a Frenchman. But there was a general appreciation of the close relationship between these concessions and extraterritorial privileges, and this cannot but have reinforced the altruism behind the American treaty of 1920.

Thus, in 1924, Siam seemed stalemated with about a dozen powers still to deal with. The only path to success seemed to lie through the chancelleries of Europe, which were too distant to be effectively reached from Bangkok. Accordingly, Prince Traidos Prabandh, the Foreign Minister, sailed with Francis Sayre, the foreign adviser, under a roving commission to persuade the treaty powers to renounce extraterritoriality. They had a record year of treaty-making activity, eloquence, and perseverance in the face of repeated setbacks. Every time they left one country to negotiate another treaty, they were recalled to the scene of their last activity by some new difficulty that had arisen.<sup>94</sup>

When Sayre reached Paris, he found that fresh problems had arisen with regard to the treaty that he thought had been already settled in Bangkok. Having adjusted these difficulties, he was once more about to sign when a cable came from Bangkok saying that the wife of one of the French legal advisers had been murderously attacked there. Fortunately this was kept out of the papers and was eventually found to be the work of an irresponsible individual, but of this it took time to convince the French Cabinet. Sayre felt

it was essential to sign the French treaty first since it would be the keystone to the others that were to follow. Success finally crowned his efforts, and the treaty was signed on January 21, 1925. Its individual clauses did not have the same value for both the contracting parties since the French interests in Siam were far greater than Siamese interests in France. A special agreement was made for Indo-China.

The following month, in London, the outlook was very discouraging. The Labor Government, friendly to Siam, had been replaced by the Conservatives, who pointed out with justice that the United States could afford to be generous with Siam because her trade, compared with that of Great Britain, was non-existent. Since over 80 per cent of Siam's commerce was with the British Empire, the retention of 3 per cent duties was vital for British merchants. Incessant arguments with the British Ministers and Board of Trade officials finally convinced them that the granting of judicial and fiscal autonomy to Siam would build a more profitable basis of goodwill than would the retention of an irritating extraterritoriality. The Netherlands, despite its Bangkok Legation's lack of enthusiasm, followed this generous lead. Apart from the administration of their Javanese protégés, the Dutch stake in the country was far smaller than Great Britain's. The Scandinavian countries proved easy-going as their interests were almost wholly in shipping.

Italy was next on the agenda, but Mussolini's illness and summer vacations held up negotiations. Italy's interests in Siam were small, but she clung to the *status quo* with such determination that Sayre decided to leave her to the end, on the theory that she would not want the onus of being the sole nation to refuse Siam full fiscal autonomy. Eventually Mussolini resolved the issue, and the treaty went through.

In Spain Sayre won the cooperation of the then all-powerful Primo de Rivera, who was amused at the ten days' rush of negotiations, saying that Americans would like to make treaties over the telephone. With the Portuguese, trouble arose not so much over the fiscal issue as from the large number of Chinese residents in Siam claiming exemptions because of alleged birth in Portuguese Macao. It was also found that Cabinets then changed so frequently at Lisbon that it was hard to get permanent results. Finally Sayre got a

duplicate of the American treaty with the addition of a general arbitration clause. At the last minute—the Siamese envoys were getting used to such surprises—the treaty was held up over labels on Portuguese wine bottles.

The Belgian treaty ultimately proved to be the only one negotiated wholly at Bangkok. In the case of Japan, excellent official relations were not followed through by proportionately cordial concessions; but the new treaty did give the Japanese the right to own land in Siam—an official encouragement to their settling in the country.

The upshot of these various treaties was a great advance for Siam along the road to fiscal and judicial autonomy, with only provisional curtailments of her complete sovereignty. Formerly Siam had always been compelled to negotiate on a basis of inequality in her treaty relations. Except in the case of the United States, she had had to make concessions in every treaty she had made. She was now free, however, to negotiate the treaties of the 1930's on a basis of reciprocity, the guiding principle of which was the development of the country's resources rather than the maintenance of the rights of foreigners.

These treaties consecrated the West's collective confidence in the Siamese administration of Siamese law, and by them Siam finally liquidated the European threat to her independence. Thereafter the scene of Siam's foreign policy shifted from Europe to the Far East.

## VII ADMINISTRATION

### CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: THE MONARCHY

In their early nomadic stage the Thai people were organized for war, and a monarchy was naturally the most practical form of government for them to assume. The feudal and patriarchal character of the Thai State survived not only in Ayuthia but well into the Bangkok period, though in the meantime another element had altered the monarchical concept.

It was the more sophisticated Khmers who supplied the Thais with a theory of divine kingship. Khmer words, ideas, and royal ceremonial were absorbed slowly through proximity. The process was accelerated when Siam began seriously to expand her frontiers; and it was as a result of the mass migration of Khmer prisoners (among whom were distinguished officials and jurists) after the capture of Angkor that a theoretical basis was provided for the needed reorganization of the government. Khmer theories, however, did not wholly eclipse Thai paternalism but were merged with it. In neither country was there any effort to impose a caste system as a check on royal power.

The Khmer concept of *Devaraja*, which was of Indian origin, partially identified the king with the major Hindu divinities, Siva and Vishnu. This did not run counter to the popular Buddhist belief of the Thais, which had been current since the Sukhothai period, that the king was a Boddhisattva, a semi-divine incarnation of Buddha. The Court Brahman̄s, another Indianized import from Cambodia, surrounded the king with extensive ritual. Though Hinayana Buddhism eventually triumphed as the official religion, it emerged encrusted with Brahmanic-Khmer ideas. The result was an intensified absolutism in both Cambodia and Siam, which was enjoyed by few other kings in the world. A special court language grew up to designate anything concerning the king or his possessions. He became mysterious and isolated. "Lord of Life" was



one of his many resounding titles. His former paternal relationship with his people was submerged, and he became an autocrat imposing his will on cringing masses; the patriarchal element was not revived till the later Chakkri dynasty. Since the man who filled so uncompromisingly despotic a role was unknown to his people, their loyalty was transferred from him as a personality to his office. Temples and palaces were built by the people for the king's own merit and pleasure. They waged the wars he chose to declare, and they suffered official oppression unchecked by the distant royal hand.

The growth of this master-servant concept of kingship did not, however, prevent the king from continuing the Thai tradition of hearing appeals personally and himself decreeing the death penalty. On certain occasions the king gave audience to the officials of his capital, whose prostrate forms were grouped in strict hierarchical order before the throne. The king's daily schedule was patterned after the royal Indian time-table, which apportioned his time among monks, Ministers, and the Court ladies. Each Minister brought with him a secretary at eleven every morning, and the king consulted them privately whenever he was pleased to hear their opinions. Opinion, however, is too strong a word for the replies that they perforce gave him in ambiguous, inoffensive language; for the most insignificant slip meant that even so exalted a personage as a Minister would run the gamut of cruel penalties. Foreign observers were astonished that any high official should be whipped and beaten for a mild breach of a discipline so strict that death was the penalty for whispering at a royal audience.

Naturally the court atmosphere was one of jealousy and intrigue, which were both cause and consequence of the cruelty and violence of Siam's kings. So jealous were they of their power that they often lost it. Palace revolts served as a non-legal check on absolutism, but the danger of rebellion was minimized by the awe and fear inspired by the king. Moreover, the courtiers usually preferred the favors to be gained by the exposure of a plot to the dubious spoils and real hazards of participation in one. By dividing and punishing, the king usually forestalled united action. In getting such information he depended on espionage, and the law compelled every Siamese to be an informer—the guilt of silence

merited a punishment almost as severe as that of committing the crime.

The sole moral mitigation of this royal despotism was the Buddhist religion. Since the Sukhothai period the king had become defender of that faith. Though its principles prevented neither violence at home nor warfare with other Buddhist nations, whose temples and sacred statues were destroyed, there was at least lip-service to the ideals of charity, justice, and benevolent mildness. The status of monk still exempted a man from military service. In theory Indian ethics still ruled the conduct of Siamese kings.

If succession to the throne had become regularized, the major cause of domestic unrest would have been removed. According to Kaempfer, the crown went to the dead king's brother under the ancient laws of Siam.<sup>1</sup> But the Palatine Law of 1458 gave the throne to the eldest son of the queen. Royal princes' rank followed that of their mothers, but the kings themselves often tried to put forward a favorite son at the expense of legal rights. Usually such rules as existed were broken more often than they were observed. Rivals fought it out between themselves, and the strongest member of the royal family usually came out on top. The officials had no right to interfere in the succession, though they naturally supported their favorite candidate; and the palace revolutions rarely affected the people. Sometimes even foreigners aspired to the throne, as in the case of the Prince of the Macassars in the seventeenth century. To put an end to this uncertainty as to the succession, an ancient law was revived in 1887, which required each king to appoint his heir during his lifetime.

The creation of the Siamese bureaucracy was the work of the youthful King Trailok in the fifteenth century. In the Ayuthian period, as Siam's boundaries were rapidly extended, the king's influence weakened when it reached the outlying territories. The change in the feudal system from a territorial to a personal basis was highly compatible with the Khmer deification of kingship and was ultimately crystallized in the administrative reorganization. The transformation of a warrior nobility into an official class paralleled the king's metamorphosis from a patriarchal chieftain into a semi-divine autocrat.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: THE BUREAUCRACY <sup>2</sup>

Two royal Councils aided the king in the business of State. The *Luk Khun Sala* was a council of Ministers and heads of State Departments, presided over by the king, or in his absence by the chief of the civil division. The *Luk Khun Sala Hlwan* was a supreme court made up of Brahman judicial advisers. The former council dealt with general administrative affairs, the latter with judicial. A vague separation of powers was thus effected, though the king, who presided over both, combined all the powers in his own person. No measure passed by the councils was effective without the king's consent. A third Princely Council was added in the late eighteenth century when the princes came to be the actual and not merely the nominal heads of the departments.

Departments, or *krams*, were divided on a military-civil basis. Members of the royal family headed the civil division, though for long they were inactive and held only titular office. This, however, was not the case with the *van-na* and *van-hlan*, princes of the front and rear palaces, who worked actively in the administration. The sons of high officials were the officers of the royal household, and their proximity to the king gave them considerable influence.

*Senapati and Mantri*

The traditional four-fold division of the Thai army, as well as the old Thai feudal titles, were utilized by Trailok's Khmer advisers as the basis on which to model their highly complex civil departments. These were headed by the six *senapati*, or Ministers of State, who lived in the capital. Originally their power was limited to their domains; but gradually, with the kingdom's growth, their powers increased. As another result of this expansion, minor *krams* were also developed, the most notable being those of the six *mantri*, or councillors, who were responsible directly to the king. Naturally they varied as to influence, and the most important among the minor *krams* was that of the Court Brahmans.

Within the *kram* itself, the organization usually centered around certain basic officials: the head, his deputy, the registrar, and a large staff, whose exact functions were often clothed in mystery. The head of the civil division for the whole kingdom was the *Kram Mahadaiya*, whose powers gradually came to

include those of the provincial governors, who were responsible to him. But clearcut divisions were not maintained. After the rebellion of 1691 in the southern provinces, the civil division there passed under military control; and this change became crystallized in such a way that the civil head became Minister of the North, and the military head, Minister of the South. Thus a geographical division came to triumph over a functional one, each Minister heading both civil and military *krams* within his area of control.

Four other Ministers, in addition to those of the North and South, made up the *Luk Khun Sala*. The *Kram Nagarapala* administered the capital's affairs, which included police and prison control, and, later, the collection of certain local revenues. The *Kram Na*, or Minister of Lands, tried certain fiscal cases in connection with rice revenue collections and conducted whatever public works were essential to agricultural development. He also bought grain and livestock for State storage. The graft that was seemingly inseparable from this function ran through the whole department, the subordinates dutifully following the Minister's example. In time the Ministry of Lands became one of the most inefficient and corrupt of the departments.

The Minister of the Treasury, *Kram Blah Glan*, had judicial functions in such cases as concerned his department's revenues. At first his work was slight, and the few public works were carried out by conscripted labor. But when the king began to trade with China, this official's duties assumed ever larger proportions; and he became also Minister of Commerce and Secretary for Foreign Affairs. It was with this Minister, called Phraklang or Barcalon, that the first Europeans came into contact. He arranged their audience with the king, despatched envoys to foreign countries, and organized the import and export trade.

The Minister of the Palace, the *Kram Van*, administered justice in cases not covered by the other Ministries. Perhaps the most nerve-racking of his manifold duties was responsibility for the palace buildings and everything pertaining thereto—the harem, the workshops, the royal ceremonial, and the royal monasteries. This Ministry declined steadily in importance and was regularly held by an elderly man whose qualifications never chanced to be suited to the office.

The first of the six *mantri* was the Church Administration De-

partment, which appointed officials to supervise the monks' behavior and a court to try such of them as were accused of important misdemeanors. It was also the channel through which the king's appointments to high church office were made. The *Kram Bhusarmala*, or Department of Royal Apparel and Insignia, derived its importance from its proximity to the royal person. Minor *krams* under this department dealt as best they could with the royal harem.

The *Kram Brah Surasvati*, or Keeper of the Seals, had charge of the general registration rolls, which were inaugurated in the sixteenth century. The client-patron relationship on which the feudal system was based made the registration of clients complex. Originally it was done on a civil-military basis, but this became so inefficient and complicated that even the Siamese bureaucracy quailed before the task. Many cases arose from disputes as to which patrons controlled which clients, and the work of this department became principally an attempt to allot clients fairly evenly between civil and military patrons. Clients naturally used their option in the choice of a patron by selecting the one whose work was lightest and whose control the most distant. Every new reign meant compiling new lists and checking them over.

Two other *mantri* were the *Kram Brah Gajapala*, or Department of the Elephants, which was absorbed into the military division in the seventeenth century, and the *Kram Lom Brah Rajavan*, or Department of the Palace Guards, which followed a reverse career. The Palace Guards, though military, were under the civil régime and were drafted specifically for that purpose. They could never leave the palace even in time of war. A more curious grafting was that of the Medical Department onto the Palace Guard solely because the duties of both concerned the palace inmates.

Another *kram*, as important as the Court Brahmans, was that of the royal scribes charged with the duty of writing and conserving State documents. Court poets and astrologers were also part of this *kram*. The last *mantri* was the *Kram Brah Glan Mahasampati*, which took over most of the Minister of the Treasury's fiscal functions.

The obvious defects of this so-called system appeared very soon after its official birth in 1454. King Trailok had evolved an admin-

istration suited to a small State, whose autocratic ruler could personally supervise his bureaucracy. But as Siam grew apace, some *krams* were overloaded with work; others did too little; and all of them exploited the people. Centralization, the very essence of the system, broke down; and specialization of function disappeared chiefly as the result of the sheer physical impossibility of control. Moreover, the absence of organizing ability is illustrated by the realignment of departmental functions for the most trivial reasons. The Law of Offenses against the Government throws some light on the monarchs' appreciation of the problem and attempts to control it. Penalties were meted out for bribery, disobedience, unjustified assumption of honors and ranks, abuse of office, divulgence of State secrets, incompetency, oppression of the people, and the wilful misconstruction of orders.

The growth of the defects was favored by all too frequent accession of weak kings and by the general inertia that accompanied prolonged periods of peace. Tenure of office, for underlings and high officials alike, hung too much on the slender thread of royal favor. Since the king was afraid to assign too much power to any single functionary, the official used his brief period of office to squeeze the people under his transient control. Not until the paternalistic, though still absolute, rule of King Chulalongkorn was the whole overgrown, corrupt, and inefficient system scrapped, and an attempt made to educate salaried officials to a sense of political and social responsibility. The people, always passive under the concentrated power and extravagance of the court, welcomed the change, though not articulately.

### *Provincial Administration*

In Sukhothai, the *moan* or *muang*, was the basic administrative unit; and its elastic meaning embraced the more modern concepts of kingdom, town, and province. It originally signified a town governing the surrounding territory, usually the land within a radius of thirty miles or two days' journey from the capital.

The *muang* of Sukhothai brought under its jurisdiction neighboring *muangs*, which were assigned to the king's sons to administer. In time these *muangs* became almost independent kingdoms, loosely held together by the feudal principle of reciprocal defense.

Ram Gamheng vastly extended his original *muang*, with its four satellites; but on his death there was a reversion to the old form of a central *muang* with four dependencies. Part of Ram Gamheng's conquests were absorbed into the Prince of Utong's new domain when he transferred his capital to Ayuthia, but the essential framework was preserved.

This first displacement of the capital typifies Siam's history and shows the instability of the country's towns. The fact that they were primarily administrative centers, so important that they often gave their name to the State, differentiated them from the market towns in other parts of the Far East.<sup>3</sup> Endless warfare between the various principalities and realms undermined these Siamese towns, whose fate was determined by that of the kingdom that they served as capital. Geography further contributed to their instability since almost every Siamese town was situated on the bank of a river, which often shifted its bed. Ayuthia would have had as ephemeral an existence as Sukhothai or Lopburi had not King Trailok evolved a higher central administration for his kingdom.

The essence of Trailok's scheme was a centralized control of the outlying provinces, which until then had only lightly felt the control of king and capital. As a first step in bringing the provinces under royal authority, he appointed an official responsible directly to him, transferring the feudal lords who had formerly ruled there to the lesser provinces. Beyond these lay the tributary States, nominally vassals to the king, but ruled by their own hereditary princes. The structure raised by Trailok was undermined by weaknesses from within and by the Burmese wars from without. Not until the time of Naresuan did the Central Government renew its grip by repopulating the decimated north and replacing rebel princes in the lesser provinces by governors appointed by the king.

This centralization proved beneficial to the growth of the nation but was burdensome to an impoverished people. They had to pay heavier taxes to support the increasing weight of a luxurious Court in the capital and an extortionate officialdom in the provinces. Provincial officials certainly did not return service proportionate to this burden. The revenues from the richest provinces were such as to create fierce competition for their administration. Provincial governors were entitled to half the tax on riceland, all legal con-

fiscations, 10 per cent of the fines imposed, custom duties on ships and cargoes in the maritime provinces, and any other sums they could lay their hands on. Naresuan's reforms cut down provincial governors' revenues, but they still remained important political plums.

These reforms were based on an appreciation of the failure of Trailok's reorganization to bring the outlying provinces within effective control of the capital. Provincials were required to submit regular reports on the status of their people and the execution of their orders. However, no legal efforts could stop official oppression. The people, forbidden to wander from one province to another, had no other recourse than to flee to the jungle or sell themselves as slaves to a patron powerful enough to protect them from official exploitation.

The provincial administration was patterned after that of the Central Government, though the different provinces were classified and staffed according to their importance. Local self-government was conspicuous by its absence. The village remained the administrative unit both under the feudality and the Central Government. The feudal system survived only in the personal relationship between patron and client. It disappeared territorially with the spread of the king's authority, and with the growth of absentee landlordism when the great lords were drawn to the capital, it almost vanished from the provinces.

Though there was no return to territorial feudalism, the constant warfare in which Siam engaged made the control of the Central Government even more tenuous. The Governors of outlying provinces, especially those in the peninsula, seized every chance to revolt during the Burmese invasions. When the devastated areas were repopulated by batches of war prisoners, this created a further breach in the Central Government's power. War prisoners were distributed throughout the kingdom but were left in national groups under their own leaders, who were charged with their entire administration and were responsible to the central authorities alone for public order.

After the fall of Ayuthia, Phya Tak crushed the power of many independent Governors; and his successor, Rama I, further consolidated his State. However, he still did not attempt to govern



the outlying provinces directly. The peninsular States, for example, were left under their hereditary princes; but these princes were placed under the direct rule of the Rajas of Singora and Ligor, though nominally they were under the Minister of the South. The northern provinces remained under the Minister of the North, and royal appointees governed the Inner Provinces. The seacoast was placed under the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

### *Bureaucracy and Civil Service*

Even in the most benevolent autocracy there are certain inherent defects that stand out increasingly as the State becomes modernized. Although Chulalongkorn's ideas outstripped those of his contemporaries, he could still be his own Prime Minister; and Rama VI was disinclined to use his abilities in the Herculean task of adapting and pruning the administrative machine. The revolt that inaugurated his reign may have disgusted him permanently with politics and reinforced his artistic bent; in any case, he made no attempt to strengthen the Cabinet and turned over the chief posts to men who were qualified by their ability to please rather than by their training as administrators. Just as the reins of administration were not pulled tight from the top, so within each department corruption, intrigue, and inefficiency ran riot.

The only check exercised in the training or selection of civil servants was the inclination of all the educated men in the country to enter government service. The Thais were traditionally used to governing other peoples, and the highly personal feudal system was always the means of so doing. Thus when Chulalongkorn, like the French kings of the seventeenth century, displaced hereditary provincial Governors by royal officials, he had to use members of his own family on whose loyalty he could count. The feudality was lured to the capital where they were appointed to official positions.

Siamese officials had little security in regard to promotion and pension. Career civil servants were at the mercy of their superiors' caprices, and for many years there were no pension rules in Siam. Irregularity was also the rule in regard to salaries. Tradition favored gift-offerings to officials from litigants and subordinates alike; and until Chulalongkorn placed civil servants on a salary

basis, they were entitled to a certain proportion of fines and taxes. The instability of salaries and the uneven distribution of the spoils encouraged some Siamese to follow the royal example and enter business. The distinction between receiving gifts, entering business, and abusing office as a means to private profit, has always been a fine one in Siam and has frequently become blurred and even obliterated.

One of the oldest grievances of the provincial Siamese was the *rachakarn*, or work required by the Government. Any official from Bangkok had the right to demand transportation and any sort of unpaid labor, which was not necessarily used for government business. In 1900 this abuse was done away with, and forced labor became permissible only for government purposes.

There was little check on official corruption in the form of public opinion; it was accepted as part of the normal state of affairs. The general opinion seemed to be that it was the business of the Government to govern; and this explains not only why the people never interfered, but also why the Siamese Government never troubled to inform its nationals of the administration's progress. Through their immunity to criticism, Siamese officials generally developed a complacency that was based on the feeling that they had little if anything to learn. Foreigners were outspokenly critical in the foreign press, but reports by competent officials were never communicated to the public in any way. The publication of the first Financial Adviser's report in 1902 resulted in similar action on the part of other Departments, but the Government continued to be negligent and uncommunicative in its press communications.

One of the measures taken by Prajadhipok on his accession was a long overdue Civil Service and Pensions Act. The main provision of this law was the institution of a competitive examination for all Civil Service candidates, which was to be drawn up by a commission that was also placed in charge of the education of government students abroad. Henceforth the civil service was to be divided into three classes: ordinary, technical, and clerical. All applicants were required to be of Siamese nationality and between the ages of eighteen and forty. The retirement age was set at fifty-five, and pensions were to be granted after twenty-five years

of service. As a corollary to this reform, the king showed concern over the number of Siamese officials engaged in private business. However, Siamese officials continue to this day to do business, though less conspicuously than before it came to be formally frowned upon.

The Salaries Tax caused widespread discontent throughout the Civil Service and added to the more fundamental dissatisfaction of the ambitious group of officials who subsequently engineered the revolution. Although the depression forced a continuance of the old régime's policy in regard to cuts and economies, taxes were adjusted by the constitutional Government to fall more equitably and more directly on the propertied classes. There were, nevertheless, extensive retirements in the lower as well as the upper ranks of the Civil Service; and there was a general tightening of governmental control over both civil and military services so as to make any repetition of the *coup d'état* impossible.

A reduction in the number of administrative circles was another economical way of cutting down personnel without cutting correspondingly into the personnel's efficiency. The self-government upon which the Siamese had embarked required a complete reorganization of the whole Civil Service, which was much needed on account of the overlapping that had resulted from the amalgamation of various Ministries and Departments in the summer of 1932.

Diminution in the number of government posts led to a reorientation in the educational field. Up to Prajadhipok's time, the Government had readily absorbed all boys who graduated from Maturayom 8. But in October 1932 it was found that the examination for junior civil servants had been passed by no less than 1,000 candidates, a number far exceeding that of the available openings. Furthermore, the type of examination given had proved to be unsuitable; heads of departments complained that they had to train along practical lines even the most successful candidate. In December 1932 the new Government announced that competitive selection for appointments in the civil as well as the judicial services would be enforced, and that there would be an even stricter control over promotion. An effort was simultaneously made to turn boys to other fields.

Civil servants were again marked off into three categories; but

this time they were classified as political, ordinary, and extraordinary. The political group consisted of those who held offices, such as State Councillor, and of the officials attached to their Departments, and the duration of their appointments depended on political circumstances. Ordinary civil servants were more permanent and important than the shifting political transients. Those engaged for special work by the Government made up the "extraordinary" group, and their appointment and promotion was also regulated.

In 1934 there were 78,409 government employees, or 1.19 per cent of the male population. Of this number 89.03 per cent earned less than Tcs. 960 a year, and twelve earned Tcs. 24,000 or over. Their average annual salary was Tcs. 456.96. A total of 30,636 were employed by the Ministry of Defense alone; 25,464 by the Ministry of the Interior; 136 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 6,105 by the Ministry of Finance; 7,608 by the Ministry of Commerce and Communications; 1,392 by the Ministry of Justice; 3,507 by the Ministry of Education; 2,863 by the Royal Household; 509 by the Premier's service; and 189 others under miscellaneous headings. The budget estimates for 1934-35 provided for pensions, both civil and military, totaling Tcs. 5,500,000; and an additional Tcs. 100,000 was paid to pensioned officials of the Royal Household. The Lao Chao were still receiving as much as Tcs. 185,000.

In late March the Assembly voted reductions in this formidable expenditure, which resulted in a saving of Tcs. 286,740. Cuts ranged from 10 per cent on salaries of Tcs. 200 a month to 50 per cent on salaries of Tcs. 1,300 or over. The bill was voted by 64 votes to 34 and was adopted against the Government's wish. The new pension list included 3,872 persons, averaging Tcs. 1,279 apiece.

At about the same time the Assembly began to voice criticisms of the fact that, in spite of drastic changes in the central administration since 1932, the mode of provincial administration remained the same. The governor, for example, was still an appointive not an elective official; and in his turn he appointed subordinates in the same autocratic way, treating the people under him with an arrogance that belied both paternalistic and democratic ideals. However, a bill to make the office of provincial governor elective

"so that he should be the representative and not the master of his people" was defeated by fifty votes to twelve.

This criticism of the Assembly was directed equally against the higher officials of the central administration, who were also largely political appointees and too subservient to the State Council. The Assembly obstinately opposed a 25 per cent salary increase proposed for all officials and at the same time objected to the Government's proposal to allow Tcs. 50,000 for sending civil servants to study abroad. Instead, they proposed that the salaries of village and communal headmen should be increased.

The Assembly also opposed the increasingly prevalent practice of appointing army and navy officers to high civil office. It was voted that political officials should not serve on the Civil Service Commission because Ministers, since they were transient politicals, would interfere with the impartiality of the work of such a commission. The whole issue was illustrative of the Assembly's growing opposition to the power of the State Council to govern by appointment and to delay further the introduction of democratic measures.

An attempt is now being made to conceal corruption only when the Government or some high official is involved. The new régime is much more open about such graft than was its predecessor. In April 1938 the Government, in response to a question in the Assembly, published in the official gazette a list of frauds that had occurred during the previous three years in government offices. From 1935 to 1938 the losses due to such misappropriations totaled about Tcs. 95,042. Most of the culprits had been caught and punished, but little of the money had been recovered. In June 1938 the Post Office announced that it had evolved a scheme whereby it would in the future prevent embezzlement by making its employees deposit, at a rate of interest higher than that paid by government savings banks, a part of their salaries against good behavior.

### *The Assembly*

The electoral law has taken years of discussion to evolve and has been frequently revised. It is hard to make a constitution and administer laws for a country whose people live largely in rice

fields and jungles and are wholly lacking in parliamentary traditions. The revolutionary leaders had to import a ready-made constitution based on Franco-American models and including such features as the separation of powers, a unicameral legislature, and indirect election.

The Assembly's nominal powers included Ministerial responsibility, the right to override the king's veto, and freedom of speech; but the structure on which it rested was not wholly determined by the constitution. For ten years half of the Assembly was to be composed of members appointed by the Government, that is, by the authors of the *coup d'état*, to whom were to be added a like number of popularly chosen members as soon as the Government could devise some means of electing them.

The electoral law of Phya Mano was an excellently conceived measure. Although it was accepted as such by the Assembly, it inevitably suffered from having become a political issue. Luang Pradit maintained that Phya Mano had raised the age requirement for the electorate because he distrusted youth on principle, and that he had reduced the number of representatives the more easily to control the Assembly. Although this electoral law was twice amended during the following four years, its principles survived unchanged. And this was true in spite of open and repeated questioning of the advisability of indirect election.

For the first few years the novelty of having an Assembly commended itself to the Siamese, and its proroguing made it doubly loved. The Council, too, at first enjoyed the Assembly's wholehearted support, but this admiration soon wore thin. The Assembly, however, was too inexperienced to make its nascent opposition effective. To begin with, its very composition made opposition difficult. Since no measure could pass the Assembly without the consent of the nominated members, the cards were always stacked in favor of a government majority. Too many sessions were held *in camera*, and there was a general lack of healthy publicity about the debates. The result was that the elected members could only express support or disapproval of a measure and had no voice in the making of laws.

In the second place, most of the members were inexperienced provincials. The educational requirement for candidates was of

the slightest, but there were very few who could satisfy even that. Some of the election methods applied were amusing in their naiveté, but others were downright harmful. Even in the crucial days following the 1932 *coup d'état*, the Senate spent days discussing national music, officials' dress, and what female workers in the military arsenal should wear. Many of the major issues simply passed them by. High officials were openly contemptuous and publicly stated that they could only get down to business of State after the Assembly had adjourned. Certainly the Assembly suffered from inconsequential verbosity, excessive devotion to trivialities, and chronic inaction.

The lack of organized procedure has been one of the chief obstacles to the achievement of results by the Assembly. From the first there has been too much submitting of reports without their being productive of a clear statement of government policy. Both Ministers and nominated members have been singularly loath to make statements on the floor of the Assembly. In many instances the atmosphere could have been cleared appreciably if they had simply stated that the Government had not as yet formulated its policy on the debated subject. The Government finally announced that the newly founded Publicity Bureau would reply to members on questions of fact, and that only interpellations on government policy would be answered in the Assembly.

In the early days the Government used to hurry through legislation, presenting a galaxy of bills during the last days of the session. The members were compelled either to accept or reject them, since they were not allowed sufficient time for a detailed examination. When they criticized the defense budget, they were told that it was a matter for the military to decide; and their objections were ridiculed in the press and over the radio. The Assembly chairman frequently called down members for irrelevance, for over-criticizing the Government, or for making his own position uncomfortable. The Council treated the Assembly like school children. Bills were presented that were often inadequately prepared and that subsequently required patching up not once but several times.

The absence of tradition and experience made the whole question of procedure an entirely new structure to be experimentally

built up; and in the meantime it was used by both sides as the chief bone of contention in the absence of organized opposition.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE PROVINCES

In ancient times Siam was divided into about sixty *muangs*, each dependent on Bangkok but placed under different Ministries on a geographical basis. Those of the north and east were controlled by the Ministry of the Interior; those of the west by the Ministry of War; and the maritime provinces by the Foreign Office. Bangkok had its own administration. A marked change occurred in 1892 when all the civil affairs of the provincial *muangs* were placed under the reorganized Ministry of the Interior. Four or five *muangs* were thenceforth grouped together and renamed *changvads*, which in turn were united into another unit called *monthons*. Bangkok still retained its special administration under the Ministry of Local Government.

Under Rama VI another effort was made to increase the efficiency of this over-grown bureaucracy. An attempt was made to re-group services more logically according to function. For example, the gendarmerie was transferred from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Local Government, and the Revenue Department from the Ministry of Local Government to the Ministry of Finance. Certain other minor adjustments were made at the same time between different *monthons*.

In 1922 the metamorphosis of local government was carried a step further when the Ministries of Local Government and of the Interior were amalgamated. The Department of Public Prosecution was also transferred from the Ministry of Justice to that of the Interior, thus giving the latter full control over local administration. The metropolitan area, extending from Rangsit to the sea, was placed under a Lord Prefect, a position analogous to that of the Lord-Lieutenants in the provinces. In 1926 the number of *monthons* was reduced from eighteen to fourteen and the number of *changvads* to seventy-nine, and many other offices were abolished. The office of Viceroy was eliminated, and Lord-Lieutenants were made responsible to the Minister of the Interior instead of to the king.

In 1932 the number of *monthons* was once more reduced by



four, and the number of *changvads* by nine. For administrative purposes the kingdom was now divided into 70 *changvads*, or provinces, and 406 *amphurs*, or districts. Provinces are now administered by a committee composed of different district heads and the chiefs of the local services under a provincial commissioner.

The *amphur* has an organization similar to that of the province. It is divided into *tambols*, or communes, and again subdivided into *mubans*, or villages, which are under their own elected leader, the *phu yai ban*. In turn these leaders elect a *kamnan*, or head of the commune in which the villages are included.

### *Village Government*

No matter what form village government took under the old régime, it was never autocratic in spirit. Even in the central administration succession to office was never strictly hereditary. As many as 75 per cent of the government employees were elected by the people by almost purely democratic methods.

Siam was administered by slightly under 90,000 officials, about 22,000 of whom were directly employed by the Ministry of the Interior; about half of these were permanently installed, the rest being only transient clerks. Of the remainder, about 60,000 were village headmen elected by the people and paid from the local taxes. The *kamnans*, or communal headmen, were themselves *phu yai ban*. The first official of the Central Government to come into contact with the people was and is the *nai amphur*, who represented the dividing line in the old autocracy between appointive and elective civil servants in the provincial administration.

Time and again in recent Assembly debates the proposal has been put forward that these village and communal officials should be paid a regular salary. The Government, however, has refused to acknowledge them as civil servants on the ground that they are too numerous to pay regularly. In 1935 the Assembly tried to get them exempted from taxation, but the Government pointed out that they had never paid the head tax and had other privileges as well. In the same year a proposal to amend the method of electing village chiefs and to raise their educational standards was also defeated by the Government.

A general feeling prevailed in the Assembly that the law of local

government, which had been drawn up by Rolin-Jacquemyns on the Burmo-Japanese model and amended only once in twenty-one years, needed revision. The Central Government, by taking on itself more responsibility in the suppression of provincial crime and by developing the means of communication, was altering the character of the *kamnan's* position and work. In turn, this greatly affected village organization, which had been left quite untouched by the old régime—a curious inconsistency inasmuch as traditional communal and village government had certainly been the most democratic feature of the old provincial organization.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT: THE MUNICIPALITIES

The path to local self-government through the municipalities was, curiously enough, charted by the absolutist Chakkri kings and carried through by their constitutionalist successors. As the capital, Bangkok had for centuries enjoyed a special régime. The absence of other large towns, in addition to the centralizing tendencies of the Government, accounted for the unique status of Chiangmai, the sole provincial city to boast a separate municipal organization. All the other towns were governed as part of the provincial unit in which they were located.

Municipal government started in Chiangmai in the form of a Sanitary Board, which was organized in 1921. It was made up principally of officials but had three non-official members, including an American missionary. Its revenues came from a tax on bullock carts, and its budget had to be sanctioned by the Central Government. This council did excellent work in paving and widening streets and in maintaining cleanliness and good order; it also ran a dispensary and an emergency hospital. But the Chiangmai Sanitary Board will remain in public memory chiefly for its struggle to obtain a municipal water supply, an episode that throws an interesting light on the two régimes under which the problem was discussed. That famous issue showed that the Sanitary Board, composed as it was almost exclusively of officials, provided no training ground for present-day political participation. As yet the councillors do not appreciate the importance of public health and see only the fiscal side of every issue.

Upon the accession of Prajadhipok, his liberal views found

almost immediate expression in the appointment of a commission in 1927 to visit Malaya and the Philippines and to report on the functioning of local government there with an eye to its application in Siam. The report was still incomplete when Prajadhipok was interviewed by reporters on his visit to the United States in 1931, but he asserted his intention of using municipal councils as the opening wedge in allowing to his people a greater measure of local self-government. The law, then in preparation, was to grant to these councils the power to levy taxes, to care for public health, to maintain roads, and to assure electricity and water supplies. The Government would still retain its control over all education. This law was to be applied experimentally at first in a few selected localities.

### *Changwad Councils*

Among the early promises of the constitutional régime was the guarantee that it would allot a greater measure of local autonomy. But the draft of such an Act did not appear until March 1934, and then only after there had been much harping on the old theme that the Central Government gave little return in the way of local improvements for the taxes paid by the provinces. Thenceforth each *changwad* was to have a council and an adviser especially trained in the University of Moral and Political Sciences, who would be appointed by the Minister of the Interior. The theory behind this tutorial system was that these councils would remain under the control of the Central Government until they had learned to govern themselves. Meanwhile, the twelve unsalaried councillors were to represent all classes—farmers, gardeners, merchants, and shopkeepers. They had to be able to read and write Siamese, be of good character, and show an understanding of the constitution. At the outset the Government would provide the funds: Tcs. 700,000 were allotted in the 1934-35 budget for the organization of local government. Part of this sum was to be used for educating the provincial people in the theory of self-government.

In January 1935 the training period for the first seventy municipal advisers came to a close. All passed the examination, and all were given Tcs. 110 as their initial salary. As this number was soon found to be insufficient, more were trained. In 1935-36 the budget

allocated Tcs. 642,360 for promoting local government. The Minister of the Interior appointed a committee from each *changvad* to select its councillors, but this was said to be a temporary measure designed merely to initiate the system. The number of members, ranging from nine to sixty-three, varied with the population and the importance of the individual *changvad*. Altogether 1,227 councillors were appointed.

These *changvad* councils duplicated the Assembly organization in that half of their members were appointive. When more than half the electorate in any locality have attained ordinary standards of education, the local council will thereafter be composed wholly of members elected by the inhabitants. But at the present tempo of educational activities in Siam this should take many years. By setting up this machinery, the Government showed clearly that it was not going to leave these councils to their own devices. The *changvad* commissioners were also required to go to Bangkok to attend a course in government policy. As regards the scope of these councils, they are not allowed to discuss politics but only local affairs. The Government has therefore assured itself of a firm grip on local administration for many years to come.

The first conference of *changvad* officials, which occurred in June 1935, discussed a varied agenda that included social, health, and prison problems. By October 1936 enough spade work had been done for the *changvad* assemblies to be officially opened. Almost no publicity was given to this event, which marked an important advance in the history of Siamese administration.

In July 1937 the Assembly discussed the advisability of abolishing *changvad* councils altogether on the ground that they had not proved successful and that their funds could be utilized elsewhere to greater advantage. The Government, in defense of the councils, pointed out that they should not be judged by concrete results, but rather as a training ground in democratic methods and political responsibility. It was true that they were quasi-governmental agencies, but they served as a link between the governed and the Government and were composed of persons having first-hand knowledge of local needs. Everyone acknowledged the dearth of trained administrators. What was not brought out in this discussion was the value these councils had for the civil party, which

regarded them as one more anchor to windward in its struggle against military domination.

The Bill to abolish these councils was defeated since the Assembly could not but approve of any strengthening of the democratic machinery, especially as the funds were being handled locally. Since the peasants, who could not appreciate the value of these local organizations, resented any extra taxation for their upkeep, the councils were handicapped from the outset by inadequate financing.

### *Municipal Councils*

After the Government had launched its *changvad* councils, it turned to the task of transforming the old sanitary boards into municipal councils. These were not actually set up until 1937 although their establishment had been authorized by the Local Government Act of March 1934.

The creation of municipal councils involved a new division of power in the provincial administration. The Central Government was represented by the *changvad* commissioner, and the new city council by a mayor—following the French rather than the British administrative pattern. As the former continued to dominate the provincial scene, it did not leave a wide sphere of effective influence to the electorate in civic affairs, although the law as originally drafted had been intended to give more real local autonomy.

In effect, the new organization simply means that the local authority, which was formerly invested in the *changvad* commissioner and *amphur* officials, has been transferred to a small body of local councillors also appointed by the Central Government. Much of their success in popular eyes depends on how the taxation question is resolved. At present municipal revenues come solely from the house and shop tax, except in Chiangmai and Puket, which get slaughter fees in addition. It is being debated whether or not to add half of the motor tax and 20 per cent of the poll tax, but even then the Government would have to supplement what would still be a totally inadequate amount. The new mayor of Bangkok, Chao Phya Rama, took a firm stand in regard to the transfer of certain taxes from the national to the municipal government. He refused the State's paternal offer to step into the breach, affirming

that the city's new government must stand firmly on its own financial feet. His efforts were rewarded with partial success: Bangkok's budget was raised from Tcs. 900,000 to Tcs. 2,276,000. Chiangmai, which was next on the list, had a municipal budget of Tcs. 113,230.

The Bangkok organization has given proof of real activity, judging from its fortnightly magazine devoted to municipal affairs. It has concentrated on the improvement of hygienic and social conditions; and its first act, in September 1937, was to segregate lepers who had long but ineffectually been recognized as a menace in crowded municipal areas. Other useful work was performed, in spite of the meagre revenues, in the inspection of markets and slaughterhouses; and real pioneer projects have been planned in the fields of housing and child welfare.

Bangkok's municipal government has been by far the most successful. In September 1937 the Governor of Korat felt compelled to dissolve the local municipal council, as a result of a series of non-confidence votes in the executive branch; and the Chiangmai council has also been the scene of chronic controversy. But these wranglings, usually instigated by inexperienced men over budgetary problems, should not jeopardize the whole movement. Municipal self-government is one of the most interesting innovations of the constitutional régime, and as yet it has not been given a fair trial. Nor has the Government itself lost faith in its potential value. New loans have been granted to different municipalities for works of public utility, such as the development of water works and of electrical power systems.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT: REGIONALISM

##### *The Lao States*

The history of Siamese Laos is typical of similar regions in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. There was a perpetual struggle for independence by the peoples of the valleys and plains, whose greater prosperity excited the covetousness of dwellers in the less favored mountain areas. The whole Mekong valley reveals similar strife, as is shown in the quantity of ruined cities, roofless temples, and palaces buried beneath the jungle. This region was long the scene of a north-versus-south rivalry and of disputes with outside powers.

Siam shared her suzerainty over these people with Burma to the west and Annam to the east and occasionally contested the land with Chinese invaders from the north.

The eighteenth century saw a brief period of peace and Lao unity; but this soon gave way to an era of civil war, in which the outsiders who were called in to aid remained to rule. The uneasy suzerainty that Siam succeeded in establishing over these peoples dated from the Bangkok period. Thereafter Lao chiefs came to Bangkok on triennial missions to present tribute and to renew their allegiance. Beyond this they ruled as they pleased within their own hereditary principalities.

The organization that Siam imposed was akin to that of the rest of the country: the hereditary prince was nominally the ruler, but his power was sapped by a royally appointed governor. The latter collected taxes and was responsible for the general order, but local customs were tolerated to an astonishing degree. The native law was left untouched, and Siamese law was only applied when there were lacunae in local custom. Aside from the forced migration of captive peoples, the worst feature of Siamese rule was its judicial aspect—not the Siamese code, but its venal application. The best feature of Siamese rule was the liberty it left to the subject peoples. The Laos were content under the light Siamese yoke. Their position forced them in any case to seek protection from one of their stronger neighbors, and because of the racial tie the Siamese were the natural country to which to turn. The Menam, too, was the best of all the local outlets to the sea.

For about a century Siam continued her policy of non-interference. Mongkut settled the Lao succession to the throne in 1854 and later tried one prince suspected of plotting to restore Burmese domination. But it took the disputes between the prince of Chieng-mai and some Asiatic British subjects over the lease of teak forests to precipitate stronger action. In 1871 these cases were brought to Bangkok to be tried there before the British consul. Although the prince won twenty-one and lost eleven of these cases, he had to pay Tcs. 320,000, for which he became indebted to the Siamese Treasury. Since Siam had been called in to arbitrate, it meant that friction now replaced what had formally been an amicable relationship.

The first treaty between Siam and a foreign power relating directly to the north was signed between Chulalongkorn and the Government of India in 1874 for the promotion of commerce between northern Siam and Burma. The Siamese promised to maintain internal order, and a British-Burmese official was appointed to act as consul. As to forest regulations, duplicates of contracts had to be sealed by a Siamese judge as well as the Prince of Chiengmai. This treaty marked the first attempt to exercise direct control over the Lao princes, as well as Chiengmai's début in international affairs. It brought to an end most of the current teak litigation and established excellent relations between Siamese and British officials in the north.

In 1877 a resident Siamese commissioner with a bodyguard of seventy was dispatched to Chiengmai to help its Chao in the art of government. This was the first step in Siam's direct administration of the country. Bangkok's control was strengthened, curiously enough, by the attempts of American missionaries to establish themselves at Chiengmai. Disputes between them and the prince led to an appeal to Bangkok for an edict of religious toleration, which was granted with far-reaching results.

Upon the death of this recalcitrant Chao, his capital city of the Golden Palace, known as Xiengmai in Indo-China and Zimay in Burma, became Siamese; and its districts and smaller towns were gradually brought under Bangkok's control. The Lao Chao retained their titles and were given pensions in return for their lands and revenues, which were now administered by Siamese officials. For many years the southern Siamese were reluctant to become officials in the north since it meant virtual exile. But the extension of the northern railroad in 1921 changed the whole situation. The southern Siamese still largely administer the country since they are more educated and energetic than the Laos.

Quite different has been the history of Siam-Lao relations in the kingdoms of Luang Prabang and Vientiane to the east. According to Hallett,<sup>4</sup> it was in 1778 that these two Lao States became tributary to Siam—at least to the extent of permitting Bangkok to control their foreign policy and to sanction the nomination of their chiefs in return for their protection against invasion. The gold and silver flowers, which they sent triennially thereafter, were indeed



symbolic of a subservient if not a tributary position. The Chronicles of Luang Prabang, however, led Prince Henri d'Orléans to the conclusion that this vassalage was of much more recent date, starting not before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Lagrée's mission established the fact that until 1831 Annam had exercised sovereignty over the left bank of the Mekong in the Lao latitudes of 16-17 degrees. That same year Siam, fresh from her victory over the Laos on the right bank of the Mekong, crossed over and invaded the country on the left bank. They eventually succeeded in transplanting the entire population of the left bank, leaving it deserted and ruined.

With the exception of a small *contretemps* with the Shans and Lus at Chiengsen in 1875, the only real strife between the Siamese and Laos that subsequently disturbed the tranquility of the north occurred in 1902 when some Shans revolted. The alleged cause was the cruelty and injustice of Siamese officials; specifically, it was the new head tax of Tcs. 2 levied by the Bangkok Government and the abuse of the *corvée* system.

The revolt started among the Shan miners near Muang Long and culminated at Phrae, where the gendarmerie post and government offices were attacked; a number of Siamese, including the governor and one Danish officer, were killed. The forest companies and the mission, which were in the same town, escaped even looting. The Shans next concentrated on Lampang, but the Chao there resisted them actively. This was a great disappointment to the rebels, who had expected all the Chao to be embittered and therefore their natural allies, or at the very least neutrals. Most of the Chao, however, had the perspicacity to see that they were better off under the Siamese than under a band of irresponsible Shans. The attack on Lampang was consequently repulsed, and this gave Bangkok time to rush troops up from the south and to put an end to the revolt.

Rumors as to the mysterious origin of this revolt were rife in Bangkok. At first the Government passed it off as another of the dacoities that had become common in that region. But curious tales continued to circulate that it was another Jameson Raid, possibly originating on the British side of the border. The Government made no attempt to reassure the public by denying these rumors.

As all the foreigners in the north had escaped without loss of life and property, and as it was generally believed that the Laos were better off now than under their own régime, the Shan raid was soon forgotten. But Bangkok learned to send north more courtcous and tactful administrators and to check the abuse of excessive *corvée* service. Certainly feeling against the Siamese existed among the Lao people at that time. Missionaries in this region were told by the Laos that they would become Christians if only they would help them against the Siamese. But the Laos were too indolent and too lacking in self-confidence as compared with the stronger Siamese ever to revolt effectively.

In 1913, during a discussion of irrigation schemes, it was reported that the people of the north were not given adequate return for the taxes they paid. Some of the northern villages felt that a distinction in their treatment had been made on the basis of their being Laos, and they were beginning to press for more regular and concrete evidence of their belonging to Siam. The current official attitude is and has been to ignore any distinctions between Thais. But the northerners still feel themselves Lao, and the individual Siamese tends to look down on these younger brothers as inferiors.

With time the Laos' political grievances have been liquidated, and they appreciate the order and educational facilities that their fellow Thais from the south have brought them. The Siamese have successfully assimilated the Laos to the point of making them feel so Siamese that their language has become obsolete. The constitution of 1932 has officially obliterated all regional differences, and the distinctions between the north and south that remain are largely sentimental. The Laos may continue to say that they feel different from the Siamese "in their hearts," but less subjective distinctions are certainly not obvious.

### *Malay States*

The earliest known inhabitants of the Malay States were the Negritos, Sakais, and Jakuns. The Negritos lived on jungle produce and hunted with bow and arrow; the Sakais planted crops and hunted with the blow-pipe and poisoned darts; and the Jakuns built and sailed boats along the peninsular coasts. The Mon-Khmer

invaders spread all over the low country, along the Menam valley, and along the seacoast between Cambodia and Pegu, pushing the aborigines of the peninsula ever farther south. The Negritos and Sakais took to the forests and hills, while the Jakuns occupied the Straits and took up piracy. Nevertheless, contacts were maintained between all these peninsular peoples.

Adventurers from China and India, representing a far higher degree of civilization, began to frequent the coast, attracted thither by its transit facilities and by the commercial possibilities of its tin and forest products. Both the east and west coasts became studded with trading posts, whose situation was determined by the mountain passes across the peninsula. The increasing piracy in the Straits intensified the use of the peninsular routes; and gradually some of the merchants who followed the first adventurers settled in the peninsula. Indians, in particular, founded cities and kingdoms on the east coast. Excavations, Chinese annals, and inscriptions give evidence of this ancient Hindu colonization. The civilization of the Pallavas of southern India spread over Java, Kedah, Cambodia, and Champa.

The most famous of these Indian kingdoms of peninsular Siam was that of Buddhist Langkasuka, founded about 100 A.D., whose sway extended from Kedah to Puket. The decline of the Pallava kingdom started in the ninth century, but it survived feebly until the thirteenth. After that another Indianized realm, that of the Sailendras, was established in the peninsula. These kingdoms were regarded as successors to the Sri Vijaya kingdom of Sumatra, and through them Mayanist Buddhism and Sanskrit were introduced into the peninsula. Successively various Sailendras States grew up in different parts of the peninsula, but no one has been able to trace the original nucleus. In any case, the peninsular Sailendras flourished from the eighth to the twelfth century, independently of Cambodia, Java, and Sumatra; and their culture flowed into Siam along the western seaboard. At the same time Siam also contacted Indian civilization through Buddhist missionaries from Pegu.

The kingdom referred to as Zabag by the Arabs was probably one of this Sailendras group. In the eleventh century a prince from the Coromandel Coast made war on the different Sailendras kingdoms of the peninsula, and this precipitated the decline of their power that was synchronous with the rise of the Khmer empire.

An inscription of 1153 A.D. shows that the Khmers overran peninsular Siam and that its kings thereafter paid tribute to Angkor. Cambodian rule, however, did not last long. In 1257 the Thais shook off their yoke, and Sukhothai expanded as far south as Nakhon Si Thammarat. Probably King Ram Khamheng's rule there was not very effective. When the princes of Utong absorbed the peninsula as part of their Sukhothai heritage, they found Thai authority south of Perak and Pattani of the vaguest. Rama Tibodi, after he had founded his capital at Ayuthia, extended his conquests to include Malacca. He was the first Siamese king to rule as far south as the Straits.

The second Thai king to follow in his steps was Trailok, who led an expedition thither in 1455; but after this effort Siamese rule became a thing of the obscure past. Moreover, even in Trailok's time the Malays had become Muslims and had thus been brought into the Arab orbit.

The Palatine law of the fifteenth century makes mention of Johore and its neighboring States as being tributaries of the kings of Siam, but this was probably wishful thinking. No revenue from these States was listed among that regularly collected by the princes of Ligor, who acted on Ayuthia's behalf among their own immediate dependencies of Perak, Pattani, Kedah, Singora, Patalun, and Phangga. In theory the tribute they collected was forwarded triennially to Ayuthia.

Ligor, whose name was probably a Chinese corruption of Lakon, was the capital of a principality that extended at one time from Kelantan to Mergui. It had been preceded by another State called Lakon, which had waged successful warfare against Lopburi in the ninth century. Ligor was probably founded in the eleventh century by a colony of Peguans under the leadership of Tri Thamasokorat, from whom its present name of Sri Temmerat was derived.

When the prince of Utong, as the rising power in the Menam Valley, called upon the Raja of Ligor to swear fealty to him in the fourteenth century, the latter refused. Whereupon Ligor was invaded, the town destroyed, and a good part of the population carried off captive to Bangkok. Thereafter the Rajas of Ligor paid tribute to the Siamese king, though not without frequent and bloody revolts, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth cen-

tures, when Ligor was finally incorporated into Siam. As Ligor was the terminus of the trade route that ran across the peninsula from Trang, it attracted both Dutch and Portuguese factories and merchants. The transfer of those traders' interests to Ayuthia marked the beginning of the town's decline, which was not arrested until Mongkut abolished the royal monopolies and thus revived Ligor's trade in pepper, timber, and minerals.

The matriarchal State of Pattani shared Ligor's uneasy relations with Ayuthia; and together they revolted against the usurper king, Prasat Tong, and declared themselves independent. The whole system of peninsular vassalage was very complicated. In 1600 Pattani had acknowledged allegiance to Ayuthia; but in turn Pattani was overlord of the small States of Raman, Loegeh, and Jering, and spent much of its time enforcing this suzerainty.

The king of Siam sent an expedition against the two peninsular rebels, he succeeded in quelling Ligor but failed to take Pattani. Before another expedition could be sent against Pattani, the queen yielded and sent tribute to Ayuthia.

In the sixteenth century Pattani was an important center with a mixed population including between four and five thousand European residents, a considerable number of Chinese, and many of the Arab and Persian merchants who had fled when the Portuguese took Malacca. The most southerly of the three peninsular trade routes ran from Kedah to Pattani. However, the trade of Pattani declined as that of Malacca improved; and foreign merchants began to deal directly with Ayuthia.

Singora was the name given by the Malays to the Siamese town of Songkla. It was originally founded by Chinese pirates, who settled there only to be later attacked by some of their undomesticated colleagues. The better to defend their town, they built walls around it, which gave such adequate protection that it became an important trading center. Singora was the terminus of the second of the peninsular routes from Kedah.

In the middle of the seventeenth century Singora participated in the general peninsular upheavals, and a Siamese expedition was sent against it. The Dutch were persuaded to participate; but they were preoccupied with their war with England, and the expedition was abandoned. Twenty years later, in 1680, when Phra Narai

generously conceded Singora, along with the Puket tin monopoly, to his new allies the French, that town was still in a state of rebellion. But the strategy of a French officer ultimately succeeded in effecting its conquest.

The most northerly of the trade routes across the peninsula, known as the Tenasserim route, was the one most used by European travelers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Tavernier reported that it took thirty-five days to reach Ayuthia and that there was danger of attack by wild animals all along the way.

Tavoy and Tenasserim had formed part of the domain of Ram Gamheng. In 1568 they were taken from Siam by the Burmese; but twenty-five years later Naresuan won them back. Tavoy was populated chiefly by non-Thais, and its status was that of a tributary State under a hereditary ruler. But Tenasserim was regarded as an integral part of Siam; and its chief town, Mergui, played an important role in the history of Siamese trade in the seventeenth century. These two towns were Siam's principal seaports on the Indian Ocean and were important entrepôts for the trade in elephants, timber, and spices. By discharging their cargoes at Mergui, vessels were spared the dangerous sea route through the Straits, which were infested by pirates.

In the seventeenth century the Burmese changed their strategy of invasion and shifted the scene of their attacks on Ayuthia to the peninsular route. The Burmese invasion of 1763 was initiated by a siege of Tavoy, after which the Burmese occupied the peninsula with the greatest of ease and were only turned back at Petchaburi by Phya Tak. Even after Phya Tak had become king of Bangkok, Tavoy and Tenasserim remained Burmese until the British invaded and occupied these provinces after taking Rangoon in 1824.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Siam's relations with the peninsula became complicated and envenomed by Britain's encroachments from the south. British explorers vied with each other in reporting that Siam's legal and moral claims to the rich peninsular States were untenable. The *bunga mas*, or gold and silver flowers symbolical of tribute, was the outward and visible mark of vassalage; and all of the Malay States as far south as Kedah and Kelantan sent them spasmodically to Bangkok. Although the

regularity with which this tribute was sent varied with the State's proximity to Bangkok and the current strength of the Siamese king, Siam received more tribute from these States than did Burma, the rival overlord. In the Pattani-Singora-Trang belt as much as 60 per cent of the revenues were sent to Bangkok, whereas the more distant provinces of Kedah and Kelantan sent the *bunga mas* only when they were compelled to do so.

The controversy between the British and the king of Siam over the status of the Sultan of Kedah illustrated how poorly defined were Siam's rights in the peninsula. Although Raffles might decry Siamese claims as being based solely on "ancient aggression and present power," British claims in Malaya were also based on aggression and power. To understand the outpouring of indignation, then and later, on the part of the British of Malaya against Siam's capricious suzerainty of the peninsular States, it must be remembered that the British invariably seek some legal justification for the use of force. The more obvious and pertinent argument that the whole peninsula was an economic and geographic unit was completely ignored by the British.

As regards Siam's moral justification of her suzerainty, English writers repeated *ad nauseam* that the peninsular States were badly governed. Siam certainly neither made nor maintained roads. The wire of the telegraph line that had been laid through to Bangkok was broken so often that it was seldom of any practical use. Brigandage flourished, and the people crowded together because they feared the consequences of isolation. The struggle of the people of the peninsula was not for land, but for health and security of person and property. Such prosperity as existed the English attributed to the Chinese, and what trade had survived to Penang's proximity.

The two provinces of Trang and Renong were exceptions to this lugubrious rule. The Raja of Renong had transformed an insignificant fishing village into an important mining center, which was so well equipped and policed that Chulalongkorn on his southern tour was outspokenly impressed. But an unfortunate corollary to the growing prosperity of this place was the increasing interference that it brought from the Bangkok Government, which was motivated by avarice and not by the desire to assist. The Raja of Trang

was also exceptional in his exercise of good government. He realized that under existing conditions the Siamese States could not compete with the British-controlled regions to the south, where every inducement was held out to immigrants to come there to settle. Already his population was being depleted owing to the falling prices of tin and pepper and to the heavy taxes and additional expenses that arose from the lack of means of communication and unsettled conditions generally. The Raja successfully concentrated on providing security for the 40,000 residents of Trang, with the result that it became the most populous of the west coast regions.

The important changes instituted by Prince Damrong in 1892 transformed Siam's theoretical suzerainty into actual control. But even Prince Damrong's ability could not accomplish miracles, and the administration was as ever handicapped by a lack of trained men and money. Nevertheless, a missionary, Dr. Dunlop, who visited peninsular Siam in 1898 after a lapse of fifteen years, was greatly impressed by the improvements effected in the interval, and especially with the new *monthon* and village organization. However, peninsular Siam could not keep pace with the growth of British influence in the adjacent States, where the local Rajas were only too glad to play off Siam's chief rival against her. The greater prosperity and security of the British States were undeniable attractions, and the real grievances against the Siamese administration were played up more or less unscrupulously by the Rajas.

When the Siamese deposed the Raja of Pattani in 1902, the papers of British Malaya played up the disturbances in that State and redoubled their perennial agitation in regard to Siam's shadowy rights over the peninsular Malays. Although the Raja had been penalized for abusing his power in a manner that the Siamese were trying to eradicate, the Siamese Government did not trouble to explain its action to the public. The advent of mining companies in the peninsula at that time, synchronizing as it did with the introduction of a new administrative system, was bound to create disturbances. Each petty prince profited by the situation to try to free himself from the Central Government's control so as to be able to make the concessions that would be most profitable to him.

Again in 1923 the Malayan press reported manifest dissatisfac-



tion with Siamese rule among the Pattanese. Most of these reports, however, were fictitious. What trouble there was came from outside, chiefly from the neighboring State of Kelantan, which by its greater wealth had attracted heavier investments on the part of the same British capitalists who had put money into Pattani. The occasion for this outbreak was apparently the discovery of extensive mineral deposits near the Kelantan-Pattani boundary, which included attractive gold veins. To this day the British of Malaya, even when they do not say so openly, feel that peninsular Siam would be far better off under their rule.

About half a million Malays are living in Siam, the great majority of them in the peninsula. In some respects their legal status differs from that of the Siamese in regard to marriage and inheritance since Muslims consider their law as inseparable from their religion. This makes for a complicated legal situation, especially as it is hard to ascertain what form of Mohammed's law is applicable. The Malays themselves admit that their religious laws are very vague, and no particular Muslim rite is recognized in Siam. The people are grouped into parishes, each of which has a *surao*, or praying house, and a staff of clergy. Siamese Malays have their own administrators, but certain laws common to the whole kingdom are observed.

Village organization has been left to follow the Malay pattern. The Malays quarrel little among themselves and are more law-abiding than the Siamese. Although they practice the Muslim rites of marriage, circumcision, and burial, their real religion is spirit worship. They observe the Prophet's prohibition of gaming and drinking; but there are no harem regulations, and generally a much diluted form of Mohammedanism prevails. Religion is, nevertheless, an important enough barrier to prevent much intermarriage between Siamese and Malays.

Siam's relations with her subject races and minorities have been on the whole excellent. The wholesale transportation of populations and the cruel treatment of captives have been offset by the natural Siamese tact and courtesy and a tolerance born of Buddhism. Until the constitutional régime came into power, the Siamese absorbed minorities unconsciously and gradually; but assimilation is now consciously fostered, particularly through the compulsory use of the Siamese language.

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## VIII · JUSTICE

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The essence of Siamese law is the *dharmasatra*, or Code of Manu, which was introduced into Siam from Burma in the Sukhothai period. The attempt to reconcile the *dharmasatra* with existing practice resulted in the growth of a mass of often contradictory edicts and legal decisions in individual instances. One king's interpretation of the law differed from that of his successors, who could repeal or amend foregoing decisions at will. Confusion as to names and dates, as well as the constant revisions, makes an accurate classification of early Siamese legal literature impracticable. In addition to this Hindu-inspired law, there were the laws promulgated by Rama Tibodi I in the fourteenth century, the Palatine Law of 1458, and the Buddhist monastic law dating from the Bangkok dynasty. Although the sacred and unalterable principles of Siamese law are fundamentally Hindu, many of the purely administrative rulings bear the imprint of Khmer influence.

Only a fraction of this legal literature survived to the Bangkok period; and what remained was so fragmentary and contradictory that King Yotfa attempted to collect, rectify, and reconcile the remnants. The corrections introduced by this monarch and by his code commission show a desire merely to restore ancient legislation in a logical manner and not to introduce a new code. Although the king intended a revision only in regard to detail, his reform proved to be far from superficial; and new ideas unconsciously slipped in. The modifications introduced into Yotfa's code in the reign of Nang Klao were not dignified by the title of a new code, but by a curious application of the law of redemption most of the barbarous punishments that had been laid down in the statute books were abolished. Further changes were introduced by Mongkut after his accession in 1851. He attempted to abolish the delays that had become so characteristic of the administration of Siamese law and to raise it to a higher level of social responsibility. He pronounced

the equality of all before the law, broke down the aristocracy's privileges in regard to their power to protect criminals, and took the first steps to abolish slavery. He raised the status of women by amending the law that gave husbands the right to sell their wives as slaves and limited a parent's right to enslave his children to those under fifteen years of age. As part of his program of religious reform, he required all persons to inform against offending priests. It was by Mongkut, too, that international courts were first set up to judge cases affecting both Siamese and foreigners.

The classification of the Code of Manu into eighteen divisions of civil and criminal law is reproduced in the Siamese code. The numerous classes of persons barred from giving evidence is identical. The principles that the courts must refuse to give judgment in cases where the amount of interest exceeds the original debt and that a debtor who denies his debt is fined double its supposed amount are also of Hindu origin.

After Rama Tibodi I had established his capital at Ayuthia in the mid-fourteenth century, he found that the next step after military control was the legal consolidation of his power. Within three months after the founding of Ayuthia he promulgated a law of evidence that remained largely in force until 1895. Within the next few years he made other lasting laws dealing with offenses against the Government, which provided severe penalties ranging from demotion to death for officials who abused their office, whether in relation to the supreme power or to the people under them. The Siamese tradition of extraordinary respect for authority was thus offset by social responsibility. From 1350 to 1366 a series of laws were enacted to cover all the multiform possibilities of theft—that most common of all Siamese crimes. In accordance with the principle of collective responsibility, receivers of stolen property were liable to punishment as well as the thief. Any negligence that might have noxious social consequences was punished. Abstention from certain acts was also potentially a misdemeanor, as for example when a man failed to denounce delinquencies of which he had foreknowledge. Since witnesses, as well as criminals, were arrested and held in custody pending long-deferred and interminable trials, few persons willingly lent themselves to law enforcement.

In 1450 a remarkable palace law was enacted, enumerating severe penalties for any violation of the sanctity of the palace and its residents. For allowing stray animals into the palace grounds, a sentry would be blinded; for kicking the palace door, the offender's foot would be amputated; the punishment for whispering during a royal audience was death; and flogging was administered for minor offenses. A man would be tortured for three days and then killed for being the lover of a lady of the palace, and death was the penalty for sending her an amatory poem. Almost everyone—and high rank was no guarantee of immunity—suffered some horrible punishment for a peccadillo at least once in a lifetime. Only the humble were comparatively safe. Any slight mistake in the innumerable rules governing Court etiquette amounted to an insult. Yet after punishment, no stigma was attached to the offender, who had wholly expiated his fault.

As in so many Oriental legal systems, it was the nature of the crime and the extent of the resulting damage to person or property, rather than the motivation, that determined the punishment. Yet there was a certain mitigation of liability, specifically in regard to criminals in their first or second childhood, the insane, or those acting in self-defense. The concept that the law was a secret science known only to judges and not open to discussion by the people still survived in 1850, when a law code in process of compilation was seized by the king and destroyed lest it should become known to the public.

In criminal cases, beating and torture were used both to extort confession and as penalties. The punishment was frequently designed to fit the crime in the most gruesome manner; thus the mouth of the over-discreet was opened to the ears, and the mouth of the garrulous was sewn up. Murderers were condemned to death; but only the king, and occasionally the Prime Minister, could sign the writ of capital punishment. Adultery was not considered a criminal offense but was punishable by a fine. In crimes of *lèse majesté* punishment fell on the family as well as on the criminal.

In 1536 an interesting law, which was not revived in the Bangkok period, provided for trial by ordeals of different kinds, ranging from a rice-chewing contest to the swallowing of molten lead.

The most minute rules of procedure were laid down, to be accompanied by prayers begging for just heavenly intervention. Either the plaintiff or the defendant could challenge the other to such a contest; and judges could impose it when witnesses produced contradictory testimony. The administration of an elaborate and exhaustive oath was considered another effective method of arriving at the truth, though it was only required of witnesses on the most vital questions.

In the sphere of civil law, the right to will property was recognized in a clear legal fashion. Marriage and divorce were simple matters, most of the rules concerning the custody of the children of divorced parents. Married women retained separate possessions, could will their property, and could reclaim their dowries on divorcing their husbands. Until the reforms in the late nineteenth century, legal interest rates were fixed at 6 per cent a month for the first three months, falling to half that amount thereafter; compound interest was forbidden. Contracts had usually to be drawn up by an independent person.

In 1633 a law of appeal was promulgated; but the only basis of appeal was the corruption, negligence, or prejudice of the judge. If the appeal was sustained, the judge was penalized; but if it failed, the appellant was liable to punishment. These provisions, however, did not prevent the filing of appeals on even the most frivolous pretexts.

### *The Administration of Justice*

In patriarchal Sukhothai the king was both the source of law and the supreme judge. Suits were so few that the king in royal audience could deal with them. The right of a subject to petition the king lasted until the twentieth century—at least in theory. With the growth of royal prestige the king's supreme power as lord of life was increased, but in practice justice passed largely out of the royal hands and came to be administered by the Court Brahmins under the supervision of the Ministry of the Palace. The king still heard the appeals of those litigants who could bear the expense, and he regulated by decree the differences that had arisen from legal contradictions.

During the Ayuthia period an elaborate legal system developed,

of whose workings Schouten and Van Vliet have left pictures in their memoirs. Inevitably the patriarchy of Sukhothai was unfitted for adaptation to the growing Siamese state, and the new elements brought in by the Khmer Brahmans had to be harmonized with the existing order. These Brahmans not only advised the king but themselves administered justice in two courts that dealt with light offenses. Eventually these two courts were brought into line with the rest of the legal system and placed under Siamese judges. Obviously the king's interest lay in keeping the administration of justice in his own palace and under these Brahmans; but the system gradually expanded beyond their control and was split up among different governmental departments, whose courts came to function independently. There was a further subdivision into advisory and executive capacities, the latter being undertaken by Thai judges under Brahman supervision. King Paramat's supreme Brahman Council of Twelve, which regulated all civil and criminal affairs, still functioned in Schouten's time; but during the Bangkok period Siamese judges came into their own.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were fourteen departmental courts, ranging from a royal court for criminal offenses to a medical court for poison cases. Purely civil cases involving no penalties seldom occurred as the Siamese were encouraged to try the inexpensive and handy arbitration of the village headman or even of the local *nai amphur*.

In the provinces the Council of Twelve was replaced by senior administration officials belonging to the three Ministries of the North, South, and Foreign Affairs. If a case came under the jurisdiction of several courts by reason of its nature or because of the residence of the parties concerned, it soon became inextricable. This multiplicity of jurisdictions brought chaos into the whole Siamese administration, and the tendency of the courts' evolution was to follow the development of the *krams* to which they were attached. Only the inheritance and ecclesiastical courts had jurisdiction over the whole country.

Judges were appointed directly or indirectly by the king, and the strictest moral and juridical rules were laid down for their conduct. There were numerous edicts against the malpractice of judges, against whom litigants could bring suit. But as the only

payment received by judges and other court officers was that portion of the fines that did not go to the royal treasury, bribery inevitably flourished despite the most specific preventive regulations. Rich people always won their suits, and for a certain sum it was possible to get exemption from wearing fetters. Bail was allowed, except in criminal cases, when witnesses were also locked up. The course of justice was further impeded by the fact that the weight attached to the evidence of witnesses varied with their social rank. The testimony of a priest or high official, for example, was worth at least double that of an ordinary subject.

Before 1875, when a series of police regulations were issued, certain officials were assigned to police duty; but they did not patrol the streets, even in the capital. Royal and princely palaces had their own guards, but they supplied only localized safety. In the provinces neighbors came to each other's aid; patrons were made responsible for their clients, and all householders within a certain radius of the scene of a crime were held responsible for the criminal.

Banditry flourished all over Siam, and especially in the north, throughout the nineteenth century. Poverty was the people's only protection since the authorities did little to help them and were frequently bribed by the bandits to remain inactive. Rewards for spying and the capture of delinquents were the chief governmental contribution to law enforcement, which remained until the twentieth century a feudal and local affair.

Prison conditions of the period almost defy description; and it is to the missionaries' credit that they were among the foremost agitators for prison reform. The jails were overcrowded and even more insanitary than the towns. Neale claimed that the very finest diet served in prisons was old alligator flesh. The Government at best supplied only the barest necessities; and though the families of rich prisoners were able to supplement the deficiencies, paupers had to depend wholly on the money that they begged from passers-by as they were driven out to their daily labor on public works.

Such being the state of Siamese justice in the mid-nineteenth century, it was no wonder that European traders were unwilling to submit their cases to native jurisdiction. Bowring had little difficulty in convincing Mongkut that the British must have extrater-

ritorial rights; for the Siamese were then glad not to have the responsibility of trying foreigners. No one foresaw the time when these consular and international courts would become so powerful that they could extract a large number of Asiatics and Europeans from Siam's legal control. Fortunately the Siamese did not resign themselves to this situation but set about ridding themselves of extraterritoriality by improving their own courts and codes.

Nor were the consular courts wholly satisfactory to the nations exercising extraterritorial privileges. Few if any consuls had legal training; and they were forced to carry out their own sentences, with the result that even the worst criminals were rarely hanged. The Siamese often complained with reason that, whereas Occidentals were very vocal about claiming extraterritoriality, they had no machinery for using such rights. Only the French and British consular courts functioned methodically and had their own prisons, which other nations used freely.

The international courts that were part of the extraterritorial machinery functioned well in certain parts of the country, notably in Chiangmai, where the British and Siamese authorities worked for years together without serious friction despite a surprising amount of litigation. From 1895 to 1900, 492 cases were tried; and the sums involved averaged £20,000 a year. Elsewhere, particularly in Bangkok, the international courts impeded rather than facilitated the course of justice. In 1892 some foreign observers expressed the view that the international court should be abolished since it was almost impossible to get a case tried before it; and even when a case was heard, it frequently took months to get a decision.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Norman claimed that the international court was the tool of the Siamese Foreign Office and a caricature of justice.<sup>2</sup>

During the first decades of extraterritoriality it was certainly hard to tell just how sincerely the Siamese were trying to promote real judicial reforms. The series of treaties made in the last quarter of the nineteenth century were concluded within a comparatively short time and were the work of diplomats of different nationalities who had had little legal training. Yet on the whole these treaties showed Siam's consistent recognition of Occidental customs in such spheres as foreign commerce and shipping.

Under Chulalongkorn undeniable progress was made, even dur-



ing his minority. In 1871 the law of evidence was revised, especially in regard to the qualifications of witnesses. That same year import and export duties ceased to be farmed out, and a little later the auctioning of the tax farm was more strictly regulated. Two years later civil servants were assigned fixed salaries and regular hours.

Officials appointed to the Council of State and to the Privy Council—both created in 1874—were told that they no longer need fear punishment for any opinions they might express. A committee of the Privy Council was empowered to act as a court to try special cases and to issue both minority and majority reports; in time this committee developed into the *Dika*, or supreme court of appeal for the whole country. An official government gazette was started in 1874; commissioners were appointed to revise criminal law; and another group was created to form a temporary court in which to try criminal cases in arrears.

In the changes made in Siamese administration between 1870 and 1880 certain foreigners maintained that Siam was paying lip-service to Western ideals in order to ward off Western control. Inconsistency, inefficiency, and insincerity certainly existed, but probably inevitably so. It would have been impossible for a small, inexperienced country, beset by aggressive Occidental neighbors, to make *tabula rasa* of a long established absolutism in the Oriental tradition and to adopt wholeheartedly the principles of the West along with its economic and political machinery. Chulalongkorn and a few enlightened advisers saw that Siam would have to pay heavily for Western intercourse; but they also realized that in any case it would be forced on them, and that it was more advisable to make the transformation voluntarily. In so doing, Chulalongkorn lost territory and had to overcome the opposition of many of his compatriots; but at the end of his reign Siam emerged a vastly more compact and stronger country as a result of the reforms that he had imposed upon her.

At the centenary of the founding of Bangkok in 1882 the foundation stone of the new courts of justice was laid with great ceremony, and the inauguration of a reform of the whole judicial system was announced for 1886. It was not until 1892, however, when a Ministry of Justice was created out of the *Luk Khun*, that

all the courts of Bangkok were transferred to the new building and the whole staff of judges placed under the new Minister. It was promised that corruption would be eradicated; the thousands of cases pending would be worked off; and the outmoded, contradictory, and copious legislation of the country would be codified. Lawyers were no longer allowed to plead the cases of their relatives; contempt of court was made a punishable offense; and new stamp duties and fees were imposed. Yet according to some, the administration of justice remained as great a farce as before.

At first the centralization and unification of the judicial system was confined to Bangkok and only gradually extended to the provinces. The sixteen Bangkok courts were reduced to seven; and with the *borispah*, or police courts, they were placed under the new Ministry. Only the naval, army, and palace courts remained under separate control.

In 1895 the provincial administration was reorganized; and the following year the king appointed special commissioners to overhaul provincial justice so that the *monthon* courts, beginning with that of Ayuthia, would be brought under the Ministry of Justice. The provinces were eventually divided into districts, each with a court of its own. These district courts became the pivot of the whole system, having jurisdiction in civil cases involving Tcs. 5,000 or under and in criminal cases where the penalty did not exceed ten years' imprisonment. So few cases fell outside these courts' jurisdiction that the district judges came to perform the bulk of the country's legal work. Appeals were carried to the *monthon* or provincial court, whose chief judge either rejudged the case or passed it on to a higher court in Bangkok. There the Court of Appeal had one chamber that considered exclusively provincial appeals. Highest of all was the Dika Court, which was analogous to the French *Cour de Cassation*. At the same time a law regulating criminal procedure in accordance with Western principles was enacted as a temporary measure until a formal code could be created.

In 1896 three judicial commissioners were appointed in Bangkok for twelve months to dispose of cases that had not yet been tried, and particularly suits in which the documents had been destroyed. This commission sat for four days a week, visited the

prisons, and disposed of nearly 4,000 cases. It was so successful, in fact, that a new commission was appointed to visit provincial prisons, armed with powers to institute inquiries that might, if necessary, result in the punishment of negligent provincial judges. These commissions won great popular respect for the new reforms. The Dika Court also performed excellent work; in a record year, 1904-05, the judges disposed of four or five cases a day, which included a laborious examination of the records.

### *Crime and Law Enforcement*

The last decade of the nineteenth century saw much legislation designed to insure internal order; but these new laws sometimes conflicted with the regulation of Siam's complicated relations with foreign States. The Pawnbrokers Law of 1896 was for years obstructed by the consular body, which refused to allow its protégés to pay the increased fee although Europeans had long complained that more control should be exercised over the pawnshops because they encouraged theft.

Yet not all such interference was noxious. Foreign teak interests brought about the first attempt at state forestry; and equally beneficial was the foreign criticism that resulted in an attempt to improve the heretofore neglected sanitation of the capital. The mining and harbor regulations of 1896-97 were also largely the result of benevolent intervention. Other Western-inspired reforms were the marriage law of 1898, the law to control secret societies, the abolition of the tax farms and transit duties, and the campaign against gambling houses, which led to their gradual suppression beginning in 1898. An even more important reform was the abolition of the *corvée* system and the introduction of paid government labor in 1899. In 1900 further sanitary measures were enacted, and an attempt was made to achieve a unification of the tax system. In 1901 land registration was inaugurated with the issue of new title deeds; a cadastral survey was begun; and the importance of acquainting the people with the condition of the country's finances was acknowledged by the publication of the budget.

It was probably inevitable that law enforcement should not keep pace with the increase in legislation. Dacoity and cattle theft were rife, particularly around Ratburi and Petchaburi, which to this

day have remained crime centers. The spoils taken from one province were sold in another; and the officials did nothing to stop this traffic, either because they were too busy with their administrative duties or because they received a cut from the profits. The Governor would not hear a complaint that could not be handsomely paid for; and his soldiers, for want of wages, hired themselves out to anyone eager to settle off old scores.<sup>3</sup> Life and property were far from secure in provincial Siam.

One great impediment to provincial law enforcement was the lack of any law controlling the possession of arms, and not until 1912 was any effort made to legislate effectively in this matter. A small-scale smuggling of arms across Siam's frontiers persisted; and once the arms and ammunition were in the country, they became inviolable private property. The legal situation was so tempting that gun-running became a profitable business among certain foreigners.

The police functioned solely in Bangkok, and for long their existence was purely nominal. They were given handsome uniforms, but their morale and discipline were deplorable. Although the Siamese generally revered authority, the police inspired little respect. Inasmuch as they were recruited by conscription and virtually unpaid, it was no wonder that they balked at night duty and did little to regulate the numerous opium and gambling dens, where most crime originated. Within a few brief years Bangkok was invaded by foreigners leading what were to the Siamese luxurious lives. Since the verandas of the houses were open to all, there was naturally a rapid growth in theft, particularly after whipping was abolished as a penalty.

The long delay in enforcing a Pawnshop Act absurdly handicapped a none too efficient force in fighting theft; for the police had no authority to examine the books or premises of pawnbrokers or to refuse licenses to places known to harbor stolen goods. The police seemed unable to differentiate between different categories of offenders, and zeal verging on brutality was often misplaced. Although murder and theft were frequent in Bangkok, few arrests were made; but a ricksha coolie had only to run excitedly over to the wrong side of the street to have the police belt him within an inch of his life and drag him in shackles to prison.<sup>4</sup>

In 1901 the total strength of the Bangkok police force was 2,066 (in addition to 250 private watchmen), of whom 270 were Sikhs. These Indians were employed for their more powerful physique—an important factor in handling the turbulent Chinese. Until the reforms inaugurated early in the twentieth century, it was a well known fact that the police pay sheets were regularly faked; but more commonly the police were bond servants who might or might not be doing police duty.<sup>5</sup> However, since the people who benefited by the old system were too highly placed to be easily penalized, reform was hard to accomplish.

In 1902 the creation of the Criminal Investigation Department, the initiation of a much-needed prison reform, and the publication of police reports in the Bangkok newspapers showed that the Government was seriously attacking the problem of increasing crime. These changes also marked another step away from the old policy of ignoring public opinion and of simply hushing up scandals.

### *Codification of the Siamese Laws*

Because of the omissions and confusion in Siamese laws, as well as the contradictions arising from the introduction of radically new legislation, a commission was appointed in 1897 to draw up a penal code. Owing to the country's rapid evolution, the Ministry of Justice had been able to do only inadequate patchwork. Certain matters of great importance, such as commercial contracts, were not regulated at all. The new texts that had been introduced chiefly concerned administrative affairs; and the only general legislation consisted of a code of civil procedure, drawn up in 1896, and a temporary and rudimentary code of criminal procedure based upon English consular law.

Siam's criminal law still abounded in barbarous penalties; but they were infrequently applied after the royal proclamation of 1897, which authorized the courts to substitute modern law and henceforth to pronounce only sentences of death, imprisonment, and fines. Nevertheless the old handicaps characteristic of Siamese law remained—prolixity of detail, unprecise language, and the citing of specific cases rather than general formulae. Penalties were still based upon external circumstances rather than upon moral responsibility, and cases not covered by the law had to proceed by the dangerous path of analogy.

Political as well as internal considerations determined the Siamese Government to push the work of codification. Extraterritoriality had brought in multiple consular jurisdictions that were very hampering to the administration, especially in regard to Asiatics who did not differ much racially or morally from the Siamese and yet enjoyed a separate legal status and privileges. The result was that, in the middle of any case in the Siamese courts, one party might produce a certificate of consular protection, often forged, which stopped the whole course of justice. However, the Japanese treaty of 1898 broke the spell of extraterritoriality by linking its elimination to the completion of the reform of Siam's judicial system.

The new penal code started with a series of indispensable definitions, which were inspired by English law. The principal commissioners were the Belgian Schlessier and the Frenchman Padoux, and the code was drawn up in three languages. The authors realized the need of making a practical text that native judges without Western training could grasp and that would make the people understand the law under which they lived. There was no attempt to displace Siamese by European law, but rather to leaven existing legislation by interpretation according to the principles evolved in the Occident.

The new code discarded the old divisions into classes, but for the sake of convenience minor offenses were grouped together at the end of the code. The administration of justice was brought under four categories: the supreme court or *Dika Court*, consisting of six or seven members directly responsible to the crown, the Court of Appeal, courts of the first instance, and police courts in Bangkok for petty crimes. The system of conditional sentences was an innovation designed to control first offenders and segregate them from criminals in prison;<sup>6</sup> the system of recidivism was adopted for second offenders, whose punishment was increased in proportion to the number of repetitions of the offense; and the French system of minimum and maximum penalties for serious crimes was adopted in modified form. There were six penalties: death, imprisonment, fines, restricted residence, forfeiture of property, and security for keeping the peace.

An interesting development was the tendency to consider juvenile offenders in a class apart. Until then they were either

whipped or given a mitigated form of the regular penalty; but under the new code a child under seven years of age was no longer penalized, and children from seven to fourteen were either placed under their parents' responsible tutelage or else sent to a reform school until eighteen years old. No penalties were decreed for vagrancy, which is rare in Siam; but society was armed against the dangerous vagabond.

The application of a code so thoroughly permeated with Western ideas was inevitably difficult in so hierarchized an autocracy as Siam's. Equality before the law was admitted in theory; but in practice even so liberal a monarch as Chulalongkorn, who had initiated the reform, refused to abide by its full implications. In 1910 a complicated suit for criminal libel brought by Prince Rabi against the king's half-brother, Prince Nara, forced the issue into the foreground. When the proceedings were read to the king, he tore up the judgment and declared that an ordinary court had no right to assume jurisdiction over his brother. Thereupon Prince Rabi sent in his resignation to the king, who refused to accept it. A meeting of the different judges was held, and a petition was signed by them protesting against such arbitrary treatment of a court judgment. The brunt of the blame was eventually borne by the chief judge of the International Court, who was dismissed and denuded of his titles and properties, whereas Prince Nara was only confined to the palace for six months. The general sympathy accorded to the chief judge marked a new spirit of independence in Siam and the growth of a sentiment that the royal family should no longer be considered above the law.

The work of codification was obviously hampered by the first world war, as well as by frequent changes in the personnel of the commission; but this does not wholly explain the delay in its completion. After the Penal Code had been promulgated in June 1908, Chulalongkorn decided to create another committee to draw up the civil and commercial codes and the codes of criminal procedure and judicial organization. This committee was made up of French jurists, with Padoux president from 1908-14 and Delestre from 1914-16. When the work of these commissions was virtually finished in 1924, it was decided to retain them as a permanent body in order to give greater unity to Siam's legal policy.

*Post-war Justice*

Following in the wake of the war a wave of lawlessness swept over Siam. There were few statistics before 1923-24, but the number of criminal cases in that year averaged one for every 215 persons; and in Bangkok the average was one for every sixty. There was no new factor in the national life that could account for this serious crime wave. An article in the *Krungdeb Daily Mail* on February 20, 1918, attacking the Ministry of Justice caused a good deal of comment in the capital. Formerly it would have been read with amused interest and not taken seriously, but now everyone asked if such an attack could have been printed without sanction from above.

It was not until 1922 that the urgent need for reform in the administration of justice was formally recognized by the Minister of the Interior, Chao Phya Yomarej, who called to Bangkok all the provincial governors to discuss measures to counteract the current lawlessness. For some years deficiencies in the penal code and a confusion in Siamse jurisprudence had been held partly responsible, notably the weakness of the rules of evidence for robbery cases. From the social angle, the penal code had unwittingly undermined parental authority. The age of consent had been set at twelve years; and kidnapping, when ransom or immoral motives were not proved, was permissible in the case of children over ten. By an amendment passed in April 1931 the age of consent was raised.

More than the law itself, faulty law enforcement was chiefly blamed for the current crime wave, in which the police came in for the major censure. The police force was composed of youths conscripted for two years and paid the sum of Tcs. 4 a month; they had no interest in making a career for themselves and were only anxious to serve out their term and get back to their own work. It was so feared that they would prey upon the population that they were not allowed to carry any weapons except a night stick. Firearms were locked up in the police station for use only in an emergency. In the absence of *habeas corpus* they made wholesale arrests of mere suspects, sometimes from mercenary motives. No legal machinery existed whereby the police had to



take measures within a specified time limit about an accused person, or whereby anyone falsely arrested could bring even a civil suit against the police. The provincial gendarmerie was both less harmful and less effective. Its failure to assure protection was shown by the fact that private policemen were hired at Tcs. 30 a month by those who could afford such expensive security.<sup>7</sup> Although in Bangkok major thefts and crimes were reported to the police, in the country the people were too afraid of reprisals to report banditry or even corruption within the force itself.

In the general purge that marked Prajadhipok's accession after the lax régime of Rama VI, more serious attempts were made to reorganize the administration of justice and to improve law enforcement methods. It had long been felt that the lack of cooperation between the provinces and their loose ties with the Central Government provided loopholes for the growth of crime.

In the conference of provincial governors held in 1928, the question of crime suppression was discussed; and a commission was appointed to consider increasing the provincial gendarmerie. Through the initiative of the Prince of Nagor Svarga an official police reform program was approved, which included the establishment of a training school for military police and of new gendarmerie stations in the provinces. Each *monthon* was given a corps of from eight to forty armed men. A central, mobile force of 110 trained men was also organized, from which detachments could be sent without delay to any crime-ridden region. The Criminal Investigation Department was entrusted with the scientific side of detective work.

A decree of December 1928 completely reorganized and unified the Ministry of Justice. Heretofore the Minister's functions had been separated into judicial and administrative. The Chief Justice of the Dika Court presided over the judicial department, while the Minister himself was responsible for administration. Under the revised system the Minister of Justice was made responsible in all matters and was required to make regular and full reports to the king; and the Chief Justice still directed the Dika Court, which continued to form part of the Ministry of Justice.

In April 1931 more authority was given to the *monthon* and *changvad* courts, which were made competent to dispose of all

cases. The new status of the *changvad* court was an improvement in many ways, but the local settling of cases that involved influential personages resulted in greater possibilities of pressure being brought to bear upon the judge. The following year, as an economy measure, four circles and eight *changvads* were abolished, together with their courts.

In March 1929 new regulations were made with regard to the office of judge. Henceforth a judge had to be solvent, of Siamese nationality, over twenty-five years old, morally and physically qualified for the post, a barrister of five years' practice, and a member of the Bar Association. Judges were forbidden to engage in commercial enterprises; and the power of dismissal was transferred from the Minister to the king.

A very important corollary to the 1928-29 reforms was the appropriation of Tcs. 2,600,000 for the construction of new prisons. The reforms of 1902 had effected some improvements in Siamese jails, such as increased control over jailers, food, and medical inspection, and a better and more humane regulation of the discipline; but the report of the prison department in 1918 had shown that the old conditions persisted in some places, where several classes of people were still illegally imprisoned.

### *Justice under the Constitutional Régime*

In proclaiming the independence of the judiciary and the unity of Siamese jurisprudence, the constitution of 1932 simply consecrated an established tradition, although in theory the king appointed and dismissed all judges. Unfortunately the immovability of Siamese judges did not figure in the constitution, nor was there any indication as to how they were to be appointed or dismissed; they were treated like civil servants, except in the important respect of a smaller salary. No special administrative courts were set up, but the unification of justice was effected to the point of making the ordinary courts competent to judge the validity of Assembly elections. In judging the political cases that arose after the insurrection of 1933, a special court was created with power to investigate and judge without appeal all cases concerning internal disorders.

This setting aside of the ordinary machinery of justice in the

interests of politics was a step backward for democratic procedure. Nevertheless, partisans of representative government were heartened when the highest court in the land, the Dika, upheld against the Government's appeal the decision of a lower court exonerating Phya Devahastin in 1935. The importance of this verdict lay in its being the first decision rendered by the Dika Court bearing upon the right of members of the Assembly to oppose the policy of the State Council.

Early in the constitutional régime it was officially recognized that the complete independence of the courts could only be secured when all the codes were completed, as stipulated in the treaties. The former régime had made only a beginning, with the promulgation of Parts I-IV of the civil and commercial codes. The executive committee set up after the June 1932 *coup d'état* hastened the process; and by the following December Part V was completed and submitted to the Assembly, and Part VI partially prepared. After this there remained only the law for the organization of the courts and the codes of civil and criminal procedure, which were being urgently hastened. These codes were rushed through in night sessions by the drafting committees as the indispensable preliminary to denouncing the international treaties in 1936; and within about fourteen months Siam was finally freed from extraterritoriality.

The new Assembly naturally precipitated many legal changes, but few were prepared for the mass of legislation that followed the 1932 *coup*. The nature of the attempts that were made to remedy the old régime's sins of commission and omission is an excellent index to the character of the new Government. There was a general recognition that laws had evolved faster than custom, and that this was especially dangerous for an Oriental people whose vanity was easily stimulated by the consciousness of new rights. Without having to struggle for them, they were given legal privileges long before they asked for them, with the result that they were apathetic about exercising these rights.

The changes thus introduced from above were more brusquely engineered than in the neighboring colonies, but they had the advantage of becoming immediately effective since they were endorsed by an all-powerful monarch. The results have been very uneven and not wholly satisfactory. The introduction of the West-

ern type of will, for example, was dangerous in that the old restrictions were now eliminated. A husband could now cut off his wife in favor of a concubine. Although the changes in procedure inaugurated in 1931 attempted to reduce the facilities for default of debtors, the new Bankruptcy Law of the constitutional régime revealed the prevalence of unlawful agreements between bankrupts and certain creditors at the expense of other creditors. The general feeling shared by most foreign countries that Siamese law has no international importance is based largely on the absence of a Siamese patent law. An inventor can, it is true, register a foreign patent at his consulate; but he can get little protection owing to the confusion created by registration in more than one place. Another law badly needed is for the control of money-lenders. In trademark enactments, however, Siam has made greater progress than the Malay States or India.

Reform was also attempted in regard to procedure. It has been a common saying in Bangkok that it takes three years of litigation to settle any doubtful point in Siamese law. The Judicial Act of 1934 aimed at the improvement and strengthening of the status of the judiciary. Opinions differ as to how far venality has been eliminated from the system when bribery is disguised as courtesy gifts. A deeply ingrained system of currying favor by begetting obligation was inherited from the old days when the intercession of superiors was the only means of getting anything accomplished. In 1934 and 1935 the salaries of judges were mildly increased to bring them more into line with those of civil servants, but they are still very low. On the whole, honesty is probably the rule and corruption exceptional.

Although the new Government confirmed the policy of making judges independent of executive pressure, submission to authority is still far too deeply rooted. Siamese judges are too accustomed to taking orders. When they come to judging a point of law, they are sure of their ground; but they bow before pressure in any case in which politics are involved. Assembly members at different times have expressed the opinion that too much power is exercised by the head judge who tours the country examining the judgments of the district courts. Although he usually confirms the local verdict, it has been felt that it was a mistake to reduce provincial judges

to the role of automatons and to give superior power to a man who has not heard the evidence.

Since the foundation of the Law School, the study of law has become increasingly popular in Siam. In 1915 a Bar Association was formed, and the school was placed under its control. Later the king ordered the formation of a Council of Legal Education to supervise the school and to revise its curriculum. Entrance requirements were steadily raised; the Siamese who had pursued legal studies abroad were appointed as teachers; and the increased general popularity of the law was shown by the growth in the number of women students. After the revolution of 1932 the course was extended to three years, and new subject matter was added. Two years later it was amalgamated with Chulalongkorn University, and the following year it was detached to serve as the nucleus of the new University of Moral and Political Sciences.

#### *Crime and Law Enforcement under the Constitutional Régime*

It is in the realm of penal legislation that one finds most clearly the mark of the new Government's ideology. The growth of crime during the first years after the revolution was very marked. It was partly due to the world depression, but more to the loosening of the whole social fabric by the revolution and its successive reverberations. For the first time the Government recognized the necessity for crime prevention; heretofore legislation seemed to have absorbed most of the time and energies of the Ministry of Justice. In the investigation of the causes of crime, the value of the penal code of 1908 came up for reappraisal. It embodied too much inappropriate European legislation, which it was found necessary to eliminate in the light of experience. When in 1935 the Bangkok Court of Appeals pointed out certain sections of the penal code as being in conflict with the constitution, the Premier appointed a committee to examine such laws.

One result of their investigations was the revival of certain ancient Siamese laws that had been omitted from the code of 1908 simply because analogous legislation did not exist in Western countries. For example, under the new code the penalties for animal theft were inadequate; and the abolition of family or communal responsibility for crime was found to be premature. The notion

of complicity, as in all primitive law, was very wide and rather arbitrary; but the penalties applied far more to civil reparations than to penal responsibility. It was operable chiefly in cases of theft, but not in cases of homicide or defamation. Again, the weakening of the family bond, which the decline of the legal responsibility of the family accelerated, was due chiefly to the increased centralization of the government and to the demands of feudal services.<sup>8</sup>

While this system broke up the family group, it failed to emancipate the individual since responsibility passed from the family to the communal or territorial group. As the family tie weakened, communal responsibility grew stronger and more specific legally, until it was halted in modern times by the introduction of Western juridical concepts, which eventually caused it to disappear. In ancient times if an offender were not caught, the inhabitants within a specified radius of where a theft occurred had to pay a fixed sum according to their rank, the victim himself being responsible for a third of his own loss. Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the amount and extent of the group's responsibility was steadily increased. A great change occurred in Chulalongkorn's reign when the State took over the sole duty of repressing crime. Thereafter the inhabitants of a region were no longer responsible if the public authorities proved powerless to discover the guilty party. However, the gap was apparently inadequately bridged; for the result was an increase in crime in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The law of evidence was also found to be inadequate. When a thief snatched anyone's hat or purse, the victim had first to prove ownership of the object stolen and then produce two witnesses of the crime. The legal machinery was so cumbersome, especially in the case of animal theft, that people often took the law into their own hands. The holding of grudges, which is a Siamese specialty, makes people reluctant to turn witness; for it is not uncommon for one who has given evidence to be found later with a knife stuck in his ribs.

The statistics published by the Government in connection with its researches into the causes of crime have been of little use since they lump together six kinds of crime, ranging from the theft of

Tcs. 800 to murder. Since there is no interpretation of the figures given, there is no way of knowing from these reports, which usually appear years after the period dealt with, whether serious crime is on the increase. But these statistics at least tardily registered the alarming increase of crime in the years 1934 and 1935.

Until then, the steady increase in criminal trials had been officially accounted for by the growing activity of the police and by the improved means of communication that made it possible to bring more criminals to justice. The fact that 83 per cent of the offenders brought before the courts were convicted was a tribute to the quality of police work. In 1934 minor cases in which the penalty did not exceed Tcs. 200 and which had heretofore been handled by the *nai amphur* were turned over to the police. In the provinces the gendarmerie courts were abolished and replaced by the district courts; but the *nai amphur*, an investigator of the crime, was placed under police authority.

As a further means of combating the crime wave, forty-four new policemen were engaged in November 1934 for work in the provinces; and a mobile squad of trained C.I.D. men was sent to crime-ridden regions, of which Rajburi was the perennial center. In 1935 crimes such as theft and kidnapping were spreading so rapidly, in spite of the new cooperation between the C.I.D. and the local authorities, that the matter was discussed by the Assembly; and the British even sent a consul to the affected regions to report. The recruiting of a special police from the army aroused public criticism, but even thus supplemented the number of police was quite inadequate. Ministerial regulations were issued limiting the number of shops permitted to sell firearms, and a little later certain types of firearms were forbidden entry into the country. Several years earlier death had been made the penalty for arson.<sup>9</sup>

In January 1935 the criminal code was amended to deal more effectively with kidnapping. From 1916 to 1921 there was an average of only ten such cases a year, mostly in Bangkok; but in 1930 the number had risen to forty-two. Hitherto the children kidnapped had merely been taken away to another district and sold. But in 1934 kidnapping was carried out for ransom and became allied to terrorism, with the result that the inhabitants of whole districts moved away in panic.

It is interesting that forgery, for which there have always been severe penalties, did not keep pace with the growth of other crimes. On the other hand, suicide, which was formerly very rare and therefore unpenalized, was growing rapidly to the point at which legislation was almost essential; there were 1,542 suicides in the years between 1932-36. The reward system still flourished, and in 1936-37 the amount paid out for information in regard to serious crimes amounted to Tcs. 55,983. In 1936 a committee was set up to study the crime records of the previous nine years and to advise the local authorities on how to deal with specific problems. To aid in this, a questionnaire was sent out to the different *changvads*; and in 1937 Dr. Bernadelli, as adviser to the Prison Department, was asked to report on the jail situation. After prolonged discussion in the Assembly, it was decided to retain capital punishment but to change its method from decapitation to shooting. The right to pardon was resolved in favor of the Assembly at the expense of the sovereign's powers.

### *Prison Reform*

In December 1932 the new Government embarked on a program of prison reform, and the Prison Department was reorganized with a view to furthering the moral and industrial training of prisoners. Social and public health measures, it was also hoped, would cooperate to nip crime in the bud; and a system of reformatories was planned to cope with the potential criminal.

Under the new régime the only complaints of bad treatment in the jails concerned the political prisoners. The Government issued reassuring statements as to their physical care. Books could be read if they were passed by the authorities, and many were engaged in translating non-political works or in hobbies such as gardening or music. Like ordinary prisoners they received an allowance of 12 satangs for their daily food.

When it was proposed in March 1934 to increase the prison appropriation by Tcs. 30,000, some of the deputies opposed it on the ground that only about a fourth of the prisoners were capable of reform. (In 1937 the budgetary allowance for prisoners was Tcs. 2,101,835). To remedy the stalemate at the Kohsichang Reformatory which had proved conspicuously unable to change its



inmates' character for anything but the worse, a Bill was drafted in November 1934 to change its locality to one more suitable for teaching boys how to earn their livelihoods, particularly agriculture and fishing. The money derived from their labor was to go to the prison's support.

The following spring, at the annual meeting of *changvad* officials, the principle of making the prisons as self-supporting as possible was adopted. The old method of contracting for food to be sent in from outside was to be obviated by having prison gardens worked by the inmates. Gaolers henceforth were to be members of the police force. The abolition of caning and of the wearing of fetters was discussed at the same time, but without results. In 1936 these two points were again brought up, this time for discussion by the Assembly, which showed a preference for stronger prisons rather than resort to such punishments—an attitude that fitted in with the Government's newly formulated prison policy.

New convict settlements, isolated and self-supporting, were to be established for vagrants, tubercular prisoners, and juvenile delinquents, all of whom were to be taught a means of livelihood. The old reformatories and restricted residence areas were recognized as ineffectual and even harmful. Instead of mending their ways, the inmates were teaching evil habits to the people in the surrounding region. It was considered that they would profit by the methods applied to political prisoners, who were being subjected to a period of military training as a preliminary to their reinstatement in civil society.

In 1937 the number of prisoners throughout Siam was estimated at 30,000, which was about the same as in 1931. The question of corporal punishment was resolved by curtailing the warden's powers slightly and by outlawing certain punishments; but whipping, which was abolished in 1909 and subsequently restored, was retained to a limited degree. The need for more medical inspection, modern sanitary cells, and the mental examination of prisoners, was also noted.

In March 1936 members of the Assembly paid a visit to the model heavy-sentence jail at Bang Kwang. They were pleased to testify to the discipline enforced there, which was accompanied by Buddhist teaching, music, and entertainments; the prison library

had a thousand books. In the utilitarian sphere industries were taught, and cooperative means were used for disposing of prison-made articles.

All this impetus towards the construction and specialization of prisons has borne fruit, but among the objectives that remain unfulfilled are a reformatory for girls, a school for wardens, and a school for freshly released prisoners. By 1938 penal colonies had been established at Yala, a prosperous town of 1,400 convicts, and an almost equally important one at Sakeo. Tubercular prisoners were sent to Klong Pai, and an agricultural colony for two hundred recidivists was started on the island of Tarutao. The greatest interest has been shown in juvenile delinquency, and two new reformatories have been built.

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## IX · DEFENSE

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### THE TAHARN: THE SIAMESE ARMY AND NAVY

When the Thais moved southward from Nan Chao, their military organization was based on family relationship, each man serving with other members of his tribe in a military band called *bmu*.<sup>1</sup> After they had settled as farmers on the land, they still retained this organization under their civil and military feudal chiefs, who profited by their fighting ardor especially during the Sukhothai period and for a hundred years thereafter. At this time there was still no distinction drawn between civilians and military. Overlords with their retainers acted as independent units, only cooperating with the royal army under special orders. The armies of tributary States were only utilized in emergencies such as foreign invasions. On a campaign each man brought his own weapons and food; and after a victory the loot was divided and the captives enslaved. Though their peoples were not particularly warlike, the geography and rival policies of many Indo-Chinese States caused them to engage in almost perpetual warfare.

One of the chief of King Trailok's many reforms was the division of his subjects into civil and military categories; the latter formed a professional army, and all the men were liable to be called up in the case of general war. The more fundamental transformation of Siamese feudalism from a territorial to a personal system, in which retainers had the right to choose their patron, broke up the old military grouping; and the power of the feudality was further weakened when the royal army grew with the expansion of the capital's control.

Trailok's son and successor introduced further reforms in the art of war, and most of the specialized *krams* of the military divisions were probably constituted in his reign. Conscription was regularized by a general registration and was placed under a special department, *suravati*. The periods of service varied, and the men

were returned to the fields for a certain portion of every year. Theoretically all freemen, monks, foreign residents, and slaves were liable for military service, though not all in the capacity of soldiers. Many of them served as advisers, camp followers, and laborers. Provincial governors managed to maintain their own armies, which were miniature replicas of the king's.

The Siamese retained the organization of the Indian army, which consisted of infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots, though the last-mentioned were unsuited to the Siamese terrain and were replaced by a corps of artisans. The infantry was the real backbone of the Siamese army. Eventually the elephants and cavalry were transferred to the civil division, and the original organization became obscured. Although between sixty and eighty thousand men could be mobilized in a few days in the seventeenth century, usually only from twenty to thirty thousand were called upon.

Siam's military forces were more inadequate on sea than on land.<sup>2</sup> Before the nineteenth century there was no real Siamese navy at all. In the seventeenth century the king had only five or six ships and about sixty galleys, which he used exclusively for foreign commerce; and on them he had to employ foreigners both as officers and as crew.

Great importance was attached to the three thousand war elephants, little to the artillery, and none at all to cavalry. According to Siamese records firearms were introduced into the country by the Chinese in the twelfth century, but this seems unlikely in view of the fact that they were not used anywhere in warfare until the mid-twelfth century. The Siamese, or their antecedents in the country, cast bronze; but it was probably not until the sixteenth century that Europeans introduced the art of founding cannon.

The military forces were grouped in four *krams*: the footguards, who were stationed near the palace and in the capital; the household troops, who served within the palace; foreign auxiliaries, who took part only in military expeditions; and finally the artisans. The footguards had police functions, were seldom used outside the capital, and never served outside the country. Their tasks were not popular: they superintended forced labor and judged minor offenders. Certain of these troops acted as bodyguards to the king,

just as the famed Amazons policed the harem. The only compensation for some of their irksome duties was the prestige derived from their proximity to the king.

The foreign auxiliaries, chiefly refugee Peguans and Mons who were used as spies against Burma, made up the most important of the military *krangs*. In the early Bangkok period they formed the bulk of Siam's army since military service was the condition upon which they were granted land in Siam. The gunners were of Portuguese extraction, and a Portuguese bodyguard was formed in 1538 to instruct the Siamese in musketry. Japanese mercenaries came to play a very important role in the country's internal history, but they were all either expelled or massacred by 1631. In general, Asiatic foreigners were used either for espionage or secret missions. Literate captives were required to write out accounts of their country's army, administration, and history.

The work of the military artisans probably consisted originally in the building of fortifications and the manufacture of arms, but by the seventeenth century their occupations had become wholly civil. The long peace enjoyed by the country before the fall of Ayuthia bred in the Siamese a loathing for military service, with the result that the artisans were transformed into builders of palaces and temples. The low rank of the artisans' *kram* shows that they never attained an esteemed position, and their lifelong retention in the palace without pay was the discouraging price paid for distinguished artistic work.

Originally the Thais must have been a warlike people, as evidenced by their wars of independence with the Khmers and their military expansion to the south. Although their organization improved and some appreciation of Indian rules of strategy was shown, nothing could compensate for the loss of their fighting spirit, which was induced by their acclimatization to tropical lowlands and a prolonged period of prosperous security. On the whole they were no match for the Burmese under capable leadership, though this inferiority was periodically offset by the accession of able kings and by the people's remarkable recuperative powers.

In vain they tried to rally their military strength after the first capture of Ayuthia in 1549. The capital's mud wall was replaced by one of brick, and the defenses of the frontier towns were dis-

mantled lest the enemy should use them as bases of attack. In justification of this inactivity Phra Narai told La Loubère that the country's impenetrable jungle and annual inundations made it impregnable without fortresses.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the king hired a missionary-engineer to fortify the Peguan frontier; and French engineers subsequently built reliable defenses for their garrisons.

The decadence of the Siamese army was largely psychological. Slowly they abandoned the more dashing tactics of the early Thais and placed too much reliance on guerilla warfare and avoiding unnecessary risks. Time counted for nothing in their ruses to demoralize the enemy. Weeks would be given over to mutual insults. Sometimes the fate of a whole campaign would be made to hinge on a duel between individual warriors or a contest in pagoda-building. They cultivated a natural talent for cunning and even treachery; feigned surrender was regularly practised, and the inviolability of envoys was not always respected. Part of their cowardice can be attributed to Buddhists' horror of bloodshed. "Do not kill" was the order given by the king to his troops when he sent them on a campaign.<sup>4</sup> The result was that when two armies met, they did not fire directly at one another, but over each other's heads; and pretty soon one side obligingly took flight. The only basis for Siam's military prestige was the even greater cowardice and incompetence of her neighbors.

Warfare was usually undertaken in the dry season when the roads were passable and the granaries full. Astrologers tagged along behind the armies to be consulted about every move, and they were punished when things went amiss. After the first day's provisions gave out, the army lived off the land; provincial governors had the unhappy task of requisitioning pack animals, porters, and supplies. The army's depredations were often more ruinous to the country than the enemy's attack. Soldiers had no interest in the war beyond pillaging the country and enslaving prisoners, which was their only form of pay. But whenever possible they preferred to pay the Government a sum in lieu of military service. The Treasury encouraged this form of revenue with the obvious result of a decline of military strength. Princely rewards for those who distinguished themselves in battle or by espionage, and bar-

baric punishments for treachery or negligence, failed to remedy this fundamental defect.

By the mid-nineteenth century military conditions had changed little despite constant warfare for centuries, according to so competent an observer as Pallegoix.<sup>5</sup> The last old-style campaign was conducted against the State of Kengtung under Rama IV. According to an English officer who accompanied this expedition, the campaign was planned with an utter disregard of all intelligent strategy.<sup>6</sup> The country was little known to the invaders, who had only a few incorrect and crude maps, with the result that there was a great loss of life, especially among the animals, which died for lack of fodder.

In 1822 Crawford called the Siamese army a timid, ill-armed rabble. There were but twenty feebly walled towns in Siam, and there were no cannon even on Bangkok's ramparts lest they should be used in a palace revolution. As in the civil administration, the different military *krams* had by now lost their functional differentiation. A small standing army of ten thousand was supplemented by provincial conscription in time of war. Each recruit from the provinces had to provide himself with a month's food, but the Government now furnished the semblance of a uniform, a gun, and a sword. The troops were blessed by priests before departing on a campaign, and an effigy of the enemy prince was ceremoniously decapitated. The army then set out in boats to reach the province in revolt or the enemy beyond the frontiers.

Since about 1830 the standing army had been trained by European officers—but with little apparent improvement, except that the style of fighting had altered slightly to involve less of a massing of troops. Officers rarely led their men but remained discreetly behind them, a naked sword in hand. Siamese tradition held that if a soldier retreated even a few steps before the enemy, the officer must cut off his head. The generalissimo stood furthest behind of all, holding a long lance with which he periodically prodded his soldiers in the back, crying, "Forward, children!" The navy at this time boasted five hundred war junks, of which twenty were built in the European style with from sixteen to forty cannon and were usually commanded by English, French, or Portuguese officers. The rest of the ships were still propelled by oars.

The army and naval forces were equally looked down upon.<sup>7</sup> Girls would not speak to military men, and even the humblest people avoided them. Everyone rebelled at the obligation of military service, and no effort was made to create an *esprit de corps*. In the provinces whole villages were deserted at the approach of the recruiting sergeant, who took off the old men and women as hostages.<sup>8</sup> Soldiers were recruited from among the worst elements of the population, and wherever a garrison was stationed there were frequent brawls. Many soldiers got out of hand and turned bandits in the provinces, creating a lawlessness that might have resulted in foreign intervention and the conquest of the country that they were officially supposed to be defending.

Even as recently as the Shan rebellion of 1902, the soldiers sent to the north looted the shops and spread terror everywhere. In almost the only conflict that occurred, the Siamese soldiers ran away unhurt, leaving their Danish officer to be shot. It was not that the individual Siamese lacked courage; but there was a complete lack of the *esprit de corps* engendered by patriotism, good food, and regular pay. As a people easily led, they were good potential military material; but their treatment caused them to degenerate into bands of coolies who did menial tasks or merely figured in processions. Through long established abuse, this service fell heavily on certain classes of the population, though theoretically all men of a certain age were liable. Physical incapacity was practically the only limit to the duration of such service, which became a lifelong and even hereditary burden on those forced into it.

All the officers were princes of high rank, about one to every six men—which is understandable when one remembers the eight hundred ladies then serving in the royal harem. They were wont to arrive at the parade ground in varying degrees of uniform or mufti. On one occasion an aged prince struggled into a pair of gold-laced trousers at the same time as he shouted to his men to shoulder arms.<sup>9</sup> The few who had received European military training were transferred to other work upon their return to the country.

The equipment with which the army worked was equally unorthodox and unstandardized. In the cavalry there were a few



Siamese ponies and ten mangy Australian horses, the remnants of a group of fifty landed in 1874.<sup>10</sup> They were used solely on State occasions, along with two artillery regiments, which had some seven-pound field guns. Negligence had also rendered useless the machine guns, many of which had been stolen and pawned after their arrival in Siam, thus increasing the danger of dacoity in the provinces. Powder and shells were kept discreetly apart as no one knew how to unite them peaceably. Many soldiers had never fired even a rifle.

For a time Europeans were hired to train the Siamese recruits, but they were amazed to learn that no word—and certainly no such concept—existed for discipline in the Siamese language. The eight regiments of infantry came to drill when it suited them and deserted in handfuls every week. At first the Europeans tried to make the service less unpopular since part of the trouble had been the arrogance and cruelty of native officers in their efforts to maintain their dignity. But the Siamese authorities never thoroughly trusted the Europeans. The recruits were regularly paid and well housed, but they resented the slightest attempt at control or training. Part of the Siamese distrust was attributable to an early poor selection of European officers, with the result that everyone subsequently employed was watched and never given a free hand.<sup>11</sup> One Danish major, who had given ten years of heroic service to the Siamese army, had each regiment taken from him just as he was beginning to get it into shape. By 1906 European military instruction had been altogether abolished.

Despite its pitiable showing in 1893, the navy, though less pretentious, was actually better than the army, according to most foreign observers. Owing to the energy of a Siamese official, Phra Ong Chorn, and of the Danish Commodore de Richelieu, it came to acquire a smart appearance, the elements of discipline, and a slight knowledge of drill, including rifle practice. Like the army, it served royal luxury and display rather than national interests. Underpaid and harshly treated, the sailors would be called out to do coolie work, such as helping the royal household to move from one palace to another. They watered the royal gardens, pulled palace rickshas, and even caught flies by the bucketful to facilitate the royal repose.<sup>12</sup> An assortment of ships, from many of which

the engines and propellers had been removed, lay anchored in the river opposite the palace. The sailors, mostly Mons and Peguans who were doomed to this particular form of serfdom, worked in groups of five for three-month terms, with periodical permission to spend a year at home. A Naval Ministry was not formed until 1910.

In 1903 a vast change came over the *tabarn* through the serious enforcement of universal military service—clearly the result of the troops' incompetence in putting down the Shan revolt the year before. The return to Siam of several energetic and patriotic princes, notably the Prince of Nagor Svarga, from military training in Europe was instrumental in effecting reforms, which culminated in the conscription law reviving the military liability of all able-bodied males for two years of service. Not everyone who was eligible, however, was called up. While in active service, a man was exempted from land and head taxes. Certain categories of citizens, such as the Chinese, mountain tribes, those physically disabled, doctors, students of university calibre, civil servants, and priests were exempted. Training was done near home, with leave given during the ploughing and harvesting seasons; and gradually the stigma of brutality and degradation that was formerly associated with military service disappeared.

Even as recently as 1906 there was no clearcut division made between the civil and military services; many officers passed over to the civil services with their rank intact. The cadet schools, such as they were, were reorganized; and the Royal Military College, which was founded in 1885, began to turn out about nine-tenths of the commissioned officers. Even the palace pages were militarized to the extent, at least, of falling in with the Siamese love of display.

Many foreigners criticized conscription severely since it paralyzed the general development of the country by removing labor that was sorely needed. An article appearing in the *London and China Express* in 1907 reproached the king of Siam for devoting nearly a fifth of his revenue to military expenditures. It pointed out that provincial barracks became centers of banditry and as such were dreaded by the people. A well disciplined, small gendarmerie, whose sole idea should be the preservation of internal order, would be far more effective and less expensive. The Govern-

ment's first duty was to put down brigandage and not to arm itself against imaginary external foes. This criticism was addressed particularly to the navy after it had purchased some gunboats. Certain foreigners had the false impression that the Siamese army was being constantly increased because the conscription law was being progressively enforced in all the *monthons*. Actually, however, there was no numerical increase in the army's strength from 1904 to 1909, and no budgetary increase for the last three years of that period.

The leaders of the new Siamese *taharn* were determined to make it into a truly national army and navy. After Japanese officers were tried, and after the Danes had resigned over a disciplinary incident in March 1906, the army became wholly officered by Siamese; and this policy was generally regarded as a success. The elimination of foreigners from the army coincided with the determination not to let any incident, no matter how inaccessible the region in which it occurred, become the excuse for foreign intervention. If her armaments were obviously ineffective against a first-class power, Siam, like the small nations of Europe, wanted a well-trained army as a proof and stimulant of national vitality. Resistance would have a moral value for the Siamese people and might impress an aggressive power if public opinion were aroused by a determined, if futile, opposition. The physical benefits of military training, as well as of a rational diet, were obvious even after a few years.

Unfortunately the evolution of the national *taharn* became involved in palace intrigue. Rama VI, whose ascent to the throne had not been envisaged, returned from abroad to find the army intensely loyal to the Prince of Nagor Svarga. To offset this, he created his own personally devoted troops, the Wild Tigers, whose name was derived from some ancient Siamese irregulars noted for their dashing courage. Nominally the Wild Tigers were instituted to revive military virtues and to instill a love of sports in Siam's lethargic upper classes. The nucleus of this organization was a group of two hundred volunteers from amongst Bangkok's civil servants; but membership soon grew into thousands, both in the capital and in the provinces, under the king's affectionate tutelage. When the unrest in the Orient in 1912 was reflected in Siam in an

abortive conspiracy centring in the army, it was but natural that the king should turn even more to the corps he had created to feel the pulse of his people. With the king's death, however, the Wild Tigers were disbanded.

Not content with having created this corps, Rama VI used the army as one of his chief agencies for uniting the country through the fostering of discipline and a national consciousness. In 1915 military conscription was extended to include a new category of men, with the result that the army thereafter numbered 30,000; and it was stated emphatically that this was no indication of an increased militarism in Siam. Of course it raised a new outcry from the foreigners, who said that it would be better to apply the fourth of the country's revenues then being expended on the *taharn* to internal improvements. Siam's subsequent entry into the war harmonized with the king's policy and was thought at the time to be a guarantee of the rights of small nations. The conspiracy of 1917, like that of 1912, was born and nurtured in the army; and it strengthened the critics' contention that the *taharn* might prove to be a potential source of disorder.

The founding of the Boy Scouts in 1912 was another step forward in the policy of cultivating patriotism and national unity. They served as a training ground for good citizenship. A boy could be dismissed from his patrol for frequenting improper places, drunkenness, gambling, theft, disobedience to his parents, cheating, lying, or even for a breach in school regulations.

Rama VI was ahead of his time in one military respect—his interest in the development of Siamese aviation. This was particularly evident during the first world war when Siam was able to send several hundred trained aviators to France, and later in the development of commercial and postal aviation in the northeast.

On his trips around the world, Prajadhipok was asked many times why Siam spent so much on her military budgets, to which he replied, as Rama VI had done, that the *taharn* was essential to awaken the soul of his people to a national consciousness; and he added that the presence of a large Chinese minority in the country was a source of uneasiness, and that the loyalty of the army was a safeguard against possible Chinese sedition. In 1928 the king for the first time made a diplomatic occasion out of the ceremony of

swearing in recruits. The military review held at the same time impressed foreigners with Siam's military progress; and the presence of two Japanese officers gave rise to alarms, which later became habitual. Just before the *coup d'état* of June 1932, the king showed that he was still very conscious that all Siam's plots had been hatched in the army when he urged that soldiers should not meddle in politics.

### *The Taharn under the Constitutional Régime*

If the army and navy were perennially potential storm centers in the days of the absolute monarchy, they were even more so under the new régime. The brains of the *coup d'état* were admittedly the civil element; but the force that made their theories practicable was furnished by certain army officers, notably Colonels Phya Bahol and Phya Song. After the final disposal of the government of the princes in October 1933, the divergence in viewpoint and the struggle for supremacy between the two elements that had engineered the revolution became more apparent.

First of all, the *taharn* had to put its house in order. In the early days of July 1932, "precautions" were taken against military action on the part of the *taharn* and police officials who had not participated in the *coup d'état*. Between forty and fifty of the higher officers were placed on the retired list. At first it was stated that princes would be treated no differently from other government servants, but later certain offices were barred to them. This inevitably affected the *taharn* since Siamese princes, like so many of the same rank in Europe, had tended to make their careers in the army or navy in preference to the civil service. Not only was there complete reorganization of the higher commands; but extensive retirements were forced in the lower ranks as well. There was a general tightening of the Government's control over the military so as to make impossible any such *coup* against the new régime as the one by which it had been established.

After each successive *coup d'état* more officers were retired. When trouble broke out in the navy in January 1934, it brought to a climax the dubious role played by naval officers during the Boveradej revolt. Longstanding uncertainty in regard to the navy's support of the constitutional régime had motivated the delicate

treatment of Admiral Phya Rajawangsan. Although he was one of the triumvirate that had composed Phya Mano's Government, his popularity with the navy was such that the Bahol administration feared to take any drastic steps against him. A demonstration by naval officers in July 1933, in which they demanded the resignation of the rear-admiral who was then a member of the Bahol Cabinet, revealed a potentially dangerous division between army and navy leadership in case of another *coup d'état*.

The navy's neutrality throughout the Boveradej revolt finally forced the Government to take active steps to remedy what the *Straits Times* called its "deplorable state of discipline." Not that the navy had been unanimous in its decision to remain neutral; but the higher officers had insisted on it and had punished the eight junior officers who rebelled and aided the Government in suppressing the revolt. Sympathizing colleagues issued circulars demanding the release of those officers who had been punished, and it was significant that the Government acceded immediately to their petition. Simultaneously twenty-three high naval officers were retired.

A Naval Institute, which had long been projected by the absolute monarchy, had been opened in May 1933 to improve the training of those of non-commissioned grade and under. Now a thorough reorganization of this part of the service was begun, and its loyalty was assured by the inclusion of the navy's strong man in the Cabinet—as Minister of Education. From 1935 on, a large part of the budget increase for defense was devoted to the purchase of new ships and equipment; for the navy had been neglected since Richelieu's day, and its standards had fallen far below those of the army and even of the air force. At a total cost of about Tcs. 20,000,000 Siam has—in proportion to her size—been carrying out the biggest of all rearmament programs.

The navy now has five thousand men in the service. In 1935 it consisted of two gunboats, three destroyers, four torpedo boats, four escort vessels, and one patrol boat. By 1937 it had been strengthened by the addition of two small cruisers, nine destroyers, and eight motor torpedo boats. In replies to criticism of the futility of such expenditures, Luang Bipul, in one of his famous broadcasts, stated that the mere sight of an anchored warship in the Menam was well worth its cost.<sup>18</sup>

While the navy was acting its minor drama, the army was taking the center of the stage. It had purged itself much more quickly of the dissenting elements, either as a result of their open revolt, as in the case of Bovaradej and his military followers, or of their voluntary retirement, as in the case of Phya Song. It was then free to concentrate on its duel with the civil element, in the course of which it used both repressive and constructive tactics.

On the repressive side, the army instituted an increasingly strict censorship of military news, beginning in September 1932. The original sugar-coating to this undemocratic pill was the excuse that press indiscretions might provoke foreign intervention or give encouragement to communists, who were then so feared in Indo-China. Censorship of military news reached such a point that one paper was suspended for reprinting an article that had appeared in the army magazine. By 1938 the *taharn* had two publications of its own, which were for the most part wholly official-inspired. In March 1937 Major Prayura Bhamon broadcast a speech, obviously inspired by the Ministry of Defense, in which he denounced journalists and particularly Assembly members who criticized the large military expenditures. He informed the public that military secrets should not be discussed for fear of annoying or informing foreign powers; that the heads of the army were highly trained men to whose superior judgment such matters should be left; and finally that the very existence of the Assembly was due to the army, which had made the revolution possible. Any criticism that obstructed the *taharn's* progress was therefore not only rank ingratitude but was deliberately harmful in that it fomented misunderstanding and discord.

Luang Bipul modified this viewpoint a few days later in another sensational broadcast, in which he said that, because Siam was a poor country, she could afford to spend only a fifth of her revenues for defense. He implied that foreign countries would bully a nation only so long as it was weak; and he linked the current military expenditures to the economic development of the country, citing the army's initiative in building factories to manufacture Siamese produce by Siamese labor.

The Assembly responded by a big majority vote to this plea, but the next year a few more voices were lifted in dissent. The

1933-34 military appropriation was increased by Tcs. 1,733,000 over the previous year, though the national budget was reduced by more than Tcs. 3,000,000. Since that time the military estimates have been steadily rising; the appropriation for 1937-38 was put at Tcs. 26,000,000, or 24 per cent of the total expenditures. Although Siam is one of the few countries still able to balance her budget, the Financial Adviser for several years in succession has sounded a warning that so much capital sent abroad for unproductive purchases is a dangerous drain on the reserve fund.

The second more constructive policy of the *taharn* was the attempt to achieve by constitutional means unconstitutional results, namely, control of the administration. The second *coup d'état* in June 1933 placed the military group definitely in the saddle. Troops were to be seen everywhere in the streets; government buildings began to look like armed camps; and Cabinet members were accompanied by veritable arsenals whenever they went. The defense budget was increased, and officers were introduced into civil departments such as the Customs. Martial law was declared during the Bovaradej revolt, and the special court set up subsequently to try without appeal all offenders against internal order further played into the hands of the military.

In January 1934 Nai Dong Indra, the most vocal champion of democracy in the Assembly, questioned the Government about its policy of filling more and more civil posts with soldiers, saying that it not only brought disappointment to deserving civil servants, but that it was an injustice resented by the public generally. The Premier denied that it was anything more than a measure of expediency and economy; he explained that, owing to a serious decline in revenues, the Ministry of Defense had lent officers to fill these posts in order to save expense. Such a policy had worked well in the Customs Department, in which an increase in revenue had already been effected. It is interesting to remember that a year later, when the king abdicated, he stipulated as one of the conditions on which he would return that military officers should be eliminated from politics.

In August 1935 the Assembly returned to the charge. In discussing candidates for the chairmanship of the Regency Council, the Assembly showed its resentment at the continued appointment



of military men to key positions in the civil branches of the administration. In the previous month the Premier, with the consent of the non-elective members, had made eight new appointments, of whom four were army majors, two senior naval lieutenants, one a major of police, and only one a civilian. When the vote was taken, a General—the government nominee—was named a member of the Regency Council. Later Prince Aditya, shortly before promoted from the rank of commander to captain in the navy, was made its president. The undercurrent of suspicion regarding the disposition of military funds during the preceding two years led to the publication of the Defense Ministry's statistics in mid-August.

The military aristocracy had no intention of sharing its power democratically with the whole army. The first step to prevent this had been taken in March 1933, when officers and soldiers were forbidden membership in the People's Party; and the withdrawal of their support meant the end of its political influence. In July 1934, when a big increase was noted in the enrollment of soldiers and junior officers at Chulalongkorn University, the Ministry of Defense curtailed this development as interfering with the discipline of the service.

The military clique continued to pay vocal tribute to the constitution, but in actual fact it was becoming increasingly dictatorial. In May 1936 Bangkok was startled by the publication of an article signed by Luang Bipul, then acting-Premier, in which he said that, if the new Government were to be a success, it must "apply dictatorship." The use of the fatal word "dictatorship" was deliberate, and the trend of the whole article implied that the time was approaching when there would be another test of strength between the two chief factions in the Government.

The climax to Luang Bipul's indiscretions came in a broadcast on March 31, 1937, which was subsequently glossed over by a more circumspect speech. Obviously it was inspired by a desire to silence the increasing opposition that he was meeting in the Assembly. In defense of the principle that might is right, he pointed out that Nazi Germany was "able to discard the need to live by the Treaty of Versailles"; that Japan's "military strength, amounting to 60 per cent of her revenues, enabled her to walk out of the League of Nations unperturbed" and to progress generally because nobody

dared to interfere with her; and that Italy was able to conquer Abyssinia as a result of her highly developed military prowess. Siam likewise would thrive in proportion to her military expenditures. To illustrate the vulnerability of Siam, he suggested the possibility that Japan might attack Singapore, and that Great Britain would be moved to assume the role of savior of Siam.

The attempts made in recent years to popularize the *tabarn* have arisen from the wave of patriotism that swept over the country in 1932, as well as from a natural desire on the part of the military clique to consolidate its position by popular support. In the old days people used to speak of military conscription as if they were sending their sons to jail. Although they still dislike the idea of a two years' extraction from civil life, their attitude now is different. Rural people are beginning to appreciate the importance of physical training and of a sojourn in distant places, and the Government has done its best to cultivate this dignified if unenthusiastic acquiescence.

In December 1932 the Government issued a statement to the effect that it was continuing its predecessor's policy of providing a military force sufficient to maintain internal order and the country's independence. A new conscription law was promulgated in March 1933. It reduced the age of eligibility but maintained the same exemptions for invalids, priests, teachers, and certain jungle peoples; it also exempted from taxation drafted farmers working on their own fields. After the Boveradej revolt, the Ministry of Education cooperated with the Ministry of Defense in arranging for periodic parades of tanks and machine guns before school children, for the publication of books of military propaganda for the use of students, and for the sale of stamps for contributions to the defense fund. The same program was later extended to girls' schools, and cheap excursions were sponsored for student visits to the new military barracks at Lopburi. A tournament of the military forces was staged in May 1935, at which were re-enacted the historic wars of the Thai race, with a display of fighting equipment ranging from Sukhothai weapons to modern airplanes.

The Boy Scouts, who had been organized in the schools since 1912, were encouraged to assume a new role. During the Boveradej revolt they were seen in the streets of the capital keeping order,

but the international scout organization regarded this kind of duty as being of too military a character. It was subsequently denied by the Ministry of Education that scouts were being taught to shoot as part of their school curriculum; it was asserted that they only received training in good citizenship. This did not seem to be a wholly satisfactory statement, however; for in the Assembly, in March 1934, a member asked if the scouts were to be considered an official movement. To this the Premier replied that originally the movement had emanated from the people, but that its idealistic character had moved the Government to support and control it. It was, he said, an aid to government work rather than an official undertaking in itself. Boy and sea scouts continue to flourish, though now in a definitely non-military way, and in spite of the fact that they have been eclipsed by a new youth movement called the *yuvajon*.

When another change was made in military conscription by the laws of 1935 and 1936, which showed leniency to more groups of people and reduced the penalties for unintentional evasion of conscription, the Ministry of Defense stated that funds were not yet available for a wholly adequate training of conscripts. In any one year the equipment on hand permitted receiving only a certain percentage of the eligible recruits. In order to give everyone the opportunity to enjoy military drill, the *yuvajon* movement was introduced in 1935 for the military training of schoolboys. The *yuvajons* consisted of groups of volunteer boys, who drilled two or three hours a week. At present membership numbers about six thousand boys, two-thirds of whom come from Bangkok schools. The movement's success can be attributed partly to the smart uniforms that the boys wear, and partly to the reduction it ultimately brings in the time served by the military conscript.

In Bangkok the *yuvajon* movement has been linked to the street urchin problem, and vagrant boys have been encouraged to join it. In September 1938 it was decided to train schoolgirls in the same organization to be field nurses, and the Ministry of Defense decided to raise the whole *yuvajon* movement to the status of a Department. Just as in the barracks soldiers are being taught the rudiments of scientific agriculture and animal husbandry on army-run experimental farms, so in the *yuvajon* vagrant boys are being given a

three-year training in trades, to the accompaniment of military drill. Obviously the *yuvajon* is copied from fascist methods of child training, but it has not yet progressed beyond the elementary stage.

The most constructive of the army's attempts to make its large appropriations more palatable to the public consists in the sponsoring of various native industries. These enterprises represent the first organized official attempt to find out the possibilities of manufacturing goods in Siam. The outstanding illustrations are the paper, silk, and sugar factories, which are eventually to be handed over to civil control. But the army will still have its munitions and clothing factories at Bangsue and a bigger plant for experimental work at Don Muang. It also supplies itself with tinned milk, which is made available to the public at ten cents a tin. Canned rations for the army's own needs have long been manufactured, and recently experiments with the soya bean have been undertaken.

In concrete terms, what has been the net result of this remarkable military effort by modern Siam? A new garrison town is being built at Lopburi to house 3,000 men; and a new naval base is being constructed at Satahib, about 150 kilometers east of Bangkok. A pilot's training school has been set up at the headquarters of the Siamese Air Force at Don Muang, where there is accommodation for two hundred planes. All these constructions have involved building a network of connecting roads.

Siam officially estimates her standing army at twenty thousand men including provincial troops, but foreign observers would double those figures. In the discussion of Burma's defense budget in April 1938, apprehension was voiced as to Siam's role in the Sino-Japanese conflict, especially as Burma was only spending 13.3 per cent of her revenues on defense. Indo-China was even more alarmed and set about strengthening her fortifications along the Mekong and increasing her demands for military aid from the mother country. Siam under the present régime is undoubtedly militaristic, but until the recent border conflict all signs pointed to this development as being almost exclusively a matter of internal policy.



## PART II



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## X · LAND AND POPULATION

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### *Land Tenure*

One of King Trailok's many important laws regulated in detail the ancient system of *sakdi na* grade. According to this traditional Thai system, every man was permitted to hold the amount of land that was appropriate to his position.<sup>1</sup> This system had the advantage of placing on every office a clear-cut value by which the wealth of its incumbent could be estimated. Theoretically, all were supposed to live on the produce of their land; but many found extra-legal ways of augmenting their income until King Chulalongkorn initiated regular salaries.

In return for his personal services to the Government, a Siamese freeman cherished his ancient right to as much land as he and his family could cultivate, which, as it worked out, did not exceed twenty-five *rai*.<sup>2</sup> When a Siamese desired to clear new land for cultivation, he had to apply to the district official for a year's authorization. During that year the official made public his application to determine whether or not the land already had an owner. If it went unclaimed, a title deed was drawn up; and after the payment of a fee the applicant was given usufruct rights over the land.

Actually the system did not work out in this way. The distributing official was usually the freeman's patron and not infrequently abused both positions. The king almost never exercised his proprietary right to expropriate for public purposes or to reclaim the land if it had been left unworked for three successive years. The cultivator of the land came to regard it as his private property. In time, certain families came to acquire as much as 200 *rai* of land, and great princes up to 10,000 *rai*, by the device of registering their retainers as members of their family. These lands were worked by the owners' slaves or clients, the latter themselves usually owning land nearby; for although a client might change his patron, he had to remain in the same province unless he had special royal dispensa-



tion. The great landowners seldom lived on their lands, but in the capital.

As there were no marks or fences separating land, confusion as to their ownership became almost insoluble. Moreover, since from July to December the whole of lower Siam was under water, there was no way of verifying claims or of settling the many disputes that used to arise during the planting season. The judge's only recourse, and it was a poor one, was verbal testimony in the absence of an *état civil*, survey, or written deed.

Pioneer survey work was initiated by Prince Damrong. In 1883 he got the king's permission to start scientific surveys, but the Survey Department was not formed by royal charter until two years later. Thereafter it wandered about restlessly among the different Ministries. Its reports did not appear until 1900, the year that the cadastral survey was begun for the issue of title deeds. This survey was still shrouded in mystery when the Department was handed back to the Ministry of Agriculture ten years later. Subsequently the Survey Department passed for the second time under the Ministry of War, after which it embarked on modern topographical surveys. Since 1910, however, it has devoted its major energies to publishing maps, which are quite inaccessible to the public. In any case, many of these maps are now obsolete—for example, that of the Menam valley completed in 1904. As for the other less settled areas, it is still very hard to get title deeds.

In a period of about thirty years only 180,201 sq. km. out of a total of 514,000 have been surveyed, chiefly in the central plain. At the present rate of about 1 per cent per year it will take another seventy years for the survey of the whole country to be completed. Most of the Department's more recent efforts have gone into a paper factory, which emits survey manuals and lottery tickets. Recently reports of the Department's activities have been appearing a little less tardily than before, but the Siamese show little interest in its work.

Although the Government has periodically hired foreign experts to make geological studies, notably for petroleum deposits, there is a great need for a survey of the whole country. For example, in northeastern Siam villages become embroiled every year in bitter disputes over the draining of certain swamps to make rice

land.<sup>3</sup> Railways would have been better laid out if there had been a complete survey and a comprehensive policy for their extension; and the new road and taxation systems cannot be worked out except on the basis of such a survey. The vast majority of arable land is still held on temporary permits.

The Land Registration Department was instituted in 1901, when the issue of title deeds based upon the cadastral survey was inaugurated. Until rice became a valuable export, land had had no selling value as any unoccupied region could be had for the asking. Only mining areas and forest lands were held as royal monopolies. In the last years of the nineteenth century rice-land, even of mediocre quality, suddenly acquired both a purchase and a rental value; and with the rising price of land, disputes about ownership became far more frequent. Under the old Siamese law cultivation for three successive years was tantamount to ownership, and there was a similar provision regarding the uncollected rental of houses. But in May 1901 both these laws were repealed.

The scheme of registration that was introduced into Siam was a modification of the famous Torrens System, which the Ministers of Agriculture and of the Interior were able to shepherd through its early years, thereby assuring its permanent adoption. The essence of this system was that the title deed itself constituted the record; for the original deed comprised preliminary publicity, an exhaustive inquiry as to previous ownership, and an accurate map of the land. This was filed at the Land Office, and a copy given to the owner.<sup>4</sup> All subsequent changes were inscribed on the original deed and bound together with copies of all mortgages, gifts, and deeds of sale, relating to the property.

The compulsory aspect of this Siamese version differentiated it from the original Torrens system, under which application was voluntary. This fact, in addition to the delays in the survey, was probably responsible for the contemptuous suspicion with which the Land Office was at first regarded. This Department's activities at first affected only a small area but were gradually extended to cover all the cultivated land in central Siam. To date it has issued about seven hundred thousand deeds, and it is now not only accepted but cherished in spite of its snail-like progress. Unoccupied lands still have nothing in the way of a recognized title since

the State finds the expense of surveying and registration not sufficiently covered by the revenue from the present fee.

About 1912 the Ministry of Finance introduced a new method of selling government land at public auction. The Land Registration Department fixed a reserve price, and the purchaser was permitted to pay on the instalment plan over a twenty-year period. The object of this measure was to give the right kind of man a stake in the country on terms easier than any private owner could afford to make. But the fostering of the small landowner is a whole problem in itself.

The feudal system has endowed Siam with a problem not shared by all her neighbors—the existence of numerous uneconomic holdings of under 5 *rai* of land. These are found principally in the self-sufficing areas, where the average property ranges from 1 to 20 *rai*; and in some regions the excessive fragmentation has resulted in holdings of one quarter of a *rai*. This situation is aggravated by the fact that even a small proprietor has strips of land often widely separated from one another and from his house. The Government has now officially recognized the necessity of putting an end to further fragmentation so as to farm consolidated holdings on a scientific basis.

While this is true of the self-sufficing areas of the north, a contrary trend in land ownership has long been manifest in the commercialized areas of the center. There the small peasant proprietor is disappearing before the growth of large landowners and their tenants, and the old custom of communal labor is being replaced by seasonal migrations from the north. This tendency, of course, can be traced to the rise in land values accompanying the growth of rice exports and the development of Bangkok and of the transportation system.

Land speculation became conspicuous when the peninsula was opened to exploitation in the early twentieth century. Up to that time land tenure in southern Siam had been as vague as Siam's claims to ownership of the peninsular States. Much of the good land in Kedah and Province Wellesley had been ruined by Chinese methods of growing tapioca in spite of previous rulings that the area under tapioca must be limited and another crop planted in conjunction with it.<sup>5</sup> After the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, free

permits to clear jungle land were issued; but the Siamese Government kept control over the waterways and the cession of mining rights. Malaya was querulous about Siam's alleged reluctance to grant land to non-Siamese planters and miners, but with time the situation was easily regulated. Until recently the Siamese have taken little initiative in developing so distant and inaccessible a part of their country and have made almost no attempt to sever the close ties of southern Siam with the Penang and Singapore markets.

Every step in the expansion of Siam's foreign trade or in the development of the means of internal communication has been accompanied by land speculation. A complicating element has been the fact that most of the new landowners are Chinese merchants and middlemen who have waxed rich in the country. Prince Siddhiporn took it upon himself to warn his fellow-countrymen of the dangers involved in their inertia and avarice. Siamese officials who had at first taken large tracts of land bordering on the southern railway, notably at Haad Yai and Singora, had unpatriotically resold them to the Chinese. In Bangkok and at Hua Hin, the Government's projects of a bridge, port, and resort had caused such speculation by Siamese and foreigners alike that it had to be checked by legislation. It is interesting that rural land values have staged a comeback since the depression. The announcement of Siam's new road network was the signal for another round of speculation; but the price of land in Bangkok—except around the new port—is still falling phenomenally.

Foreign ownership of land has long been a ticklish business for Siam because it has gone hand in hand with the extraterritoriality issue and with the Chinese demand for diplomatic representation. In the general absence of surveys and statistics it is very hard to get an idea as to how much land in Siam is foreign-owned. A post-war estimate of the amount held by Occidentals was 96,000 *rai*, the major part of which was about equally divided between British interests and French missions—the latter's holdings amounting to approximately 35,000 *rai*.<sup>6</sup>

To the agriculturally minded Siamese, land is the only real form of investment. In strictly farming areas, which means almost all of the inhabited regions, land prices are determined by the value of

the crops that can be grown on that land. Only in the commercialized areas does a second factor, accessibility to markets, enter into the appraisal. In central Siam the existence of innumerable waterways, far more than the soil's fertility, accounts for the hold that rice has on the Siamese and especially for its concentration in a small area.<sup>7</sup>

Although, in general, one may say that the Siamese farmer owns his fields, some of the most valuable land in Siam is cultivated by tenants. The average peasant in the north, south, and northeast, is as often a landlord as he is a tenant; and the former is himself a farmer who lives on his own land. The case is different in central Siam, where many of the landowners are not farmers but either Siamese noblemen or Chinese middlemen who live in the urban centers.

Another important regional difference can be traced to the commercialization of agriculture. The high degree of productivity that intensive irrigation has brought to central Siam has made land so valuable that nearly all of it is in use, with the result that rentals are far higher than in the self-sufficing areas of the north. In the north, on the other hand, land rental is an unimportant factor because a landless man can take virtually any unoccupied region simply by clearing it and settling on it. In the central plain, just before the depression, 36 per cent of the families owned no land; in the north, 27 per cent; in the south, 14 per cent; and in the east, 18 per cent.<sup>8</sup> But the landless families were merchants, shopkeepers, and laborers, both rich and poor; and in general they averaged in wealth about the same as the landowners themselves.

The regions where the concentration of property exerts the most unfavorable repercussions on agricultural technique and the standard of living are around Bangkok and in the Rangsit area. In Rangsit are to be found the largest farms with the highest productivity per family in all Siam; yet the living conditions of the peasants are the poorest.<sup>9</sup> Rangsit is cultivated by a mobile population of tenant farmers. The land belongs mainly to landlords who live in Bangkok and is managed by local rent-collectors who are naturally not on good terms with most of their tenants. No careful selection is made of the farmers, who are brought in haphazard from all sections of the country and settled on large farms averaging

about a hundred *rai* apiece. Though farmers in Siam usually pay no building rent and construct their own houses and warehouses, in the Rangsit area what construction has been done is flimsy and primitive.

No settled village life exists in Rangsit, and no attempt has been made to create it artificially. Since no provision is made to repay a farmer for any improvement he makes on rented land, he naturally does not dream of sinking what little money he has in improving the property of others. As settled communities are non-existent and rentals usually last only for a year, farmers move frequently, either from inclination or because they are evicted. The fact that rentals, like taxes, have to be paid in cash means that the tenant farmers become increasingly indebted to the landowner or Chinese middleman, who charges rates as high as 60 per cent a year. These tenant farmers have become hopeless and irresponsible; and as they make no attempt to produce food at home, their diet is seriously deficient.

Absentee landlordism is an increasingly serious problem since the land is getting more and more into the hands of moneylenders. But the depression has not aggravated this situation as obviously as might be expected. In 1934-35 investment in land was greater than liquidation of land;<sup>10</sup> and not only was there no decrease in the area under cultivation, but a marked increase in rice exports was recorded. However, most of these recent buyers were men who had surplus capital before the depression. The years 1931-35 used up most of the savings of farmers in the more isolated regions, and of the poorer farmers throughout the country, all of whom had to seek purchasers of their land and draft animals.

The number of those holding mortgages on land is hard to estimate because not all mortgages are registered and many are held by Chinese. Yet very few of the holders are anxious to foreclose, and by the autumn of 1935 the fall in rural land values seemed to have been checked. Some debts were even being paid off in the regions that had benefited by the cooperative societies. Both the Assembly and the Government have shown themselves steadfastly opposed to any radical scheme for nationalizing the land. Not only did they reject Luang Pradit's plan; but two years later, by a vote of forty-nine to nine votes, they defeated a bill for the division of unoc-

cupied land among vagrants and paupers on the ground that it gave the Government too much power and that, as an alternative, the lowering of land taxes would be preferable. In 1939 a bill to fix land rentals was defeated.

In the last years of the absolute monarchy there was a move—hardly voluntary on the part of the landlords—to reduce land rentals proportionately to the declining price of paddy and to reorganize the tax system. Land values were—and still are—obviously unsound; and until the new régime introduced fresh taxation, proprietors could afford to let their untaxed land lie idle. When the depression reawakened interest in a land tax, many Siamese families complained bitterly that they were land-poor; but that was hardly caused by the burden of taxation. By keeping land rentals high while the price of paddy fell ever lower, the landlords were bringing on themselves the very burden that they most feared.

The new régime has received countless petitions from tenant farmers, who have been regularly promised an overhauling of the whole land taxation system. This has been the consistent aim of Luang Pradit, who assumed the role of Minister of Finance in December 1938 specifically for this purpose.

### *Population Statistics*

The earliest surviving estimate of Siam's population dates from the seventeenth century—a midway point between the depopulations caused by the Burmese in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In 1688 La Loubère recorded that the state rolls listed only 1,900,000 persons; but this probably did not include old men, women, children, and slaves, or those who had fled to the forests to escape forced labor and other forms of oppression.

The stream of immigrants from Nan Chao who had successively swelled Sukhothai's population ceased shortly after Kublai Khan's conquest. Thenceforth Peguan refugees and the war prisoners transplanted from Laos and Cambodia made up the only new currents of population that entered Siam to offset the chronic decimations resulting from battle, famine, and the far more serious loss of entire villages whose inhabitants were carried off by the Burmese. All the countries of Indo-China have always suffered from underpopulation, chiefly because of the inaccessibility of the whole penin-

sula and the natural obstacles to colonization. Other traditional factors have been an unchecked death rate, and a lack of natural frontiers that has stimulated continuous warfare.

After a lapse of about 150 years Europeans came again to Siam and began to estimate its population with little accuracy or uniformity. In the meantime, Siam had expanded to become a State of about 200,000 square miles, which included even more vast stretches of jungle, mountains, and wasteland. Since foreigners were not allowed outside the capital, the estimates available for the early nineteenth century are valid only for Bangkok. In 1821 Finlayson estimated that the Chinese made up at least half of the capital's citizens.<sup>11</sup> This was supported by Gutzlaff, who also conjectured that the Chinese numbered about 400,000 out of a total population of 2,790,000. Pallegoix, who had a longer and more intimate knowledge of the country, gave 6,000,000 for the total figure, of which the Siamese made up half, the Chinese 1,500,000, and the Malays 1,000,000.<sup>12</sup> Those paying taxes represented but a fraction of these numbers, and tax returns were the only guide on which the bishop could base his estimates.

The first serious attempt to take a census of Siam was made in 1905, and then only for twelve *monthons*, whose population then numbered 3,802,032.<sup>13</sup> This maiden effort was made for administrative purposes only, but the registers were kept up to date and later expanded as a basis for military conscription. In 1909 the Ministry of the Interior made the first attempt to take a census of the whole country, calling for information as to age, sex, religion, literacy, and occupation, along with real estate and livestock data. Bangkok proved to be such a difficult problem, especially as it could be checked by no register of births and deaths, that a new census was taken of the whole country in 1910-11. Even then it was admitted that the results were quite unreliable; they showed a total population of 8,149,487 persons, in which males outnumbered females by 50,000.

In December 1915 the notification of births and deaths was made compulsory in Bangkok, and the intention was to extend this regulation throughout the country the following year. But in Siam, as in so many Oriental countries, vital statistics are considered such a private affair that the rule cannot even yet be univer-



sally enforced. In northern Siam an informal family register is kept on palm leaf strips, but it is considered dangerous to divulge the information written thereon to outsiders lest a sorcerer or an enemy make harmful use of so exact a knowledge of the day and hour of one's birth.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, unlike Westerners, all Siamese are anxious to be thought older than they really are. This is not solely due to the veneration that old age inspires, but rather to the fact that persons over sixty are exempted from paying the poll tax. Chinese immigrants uniformly give their age as fifty-eight.

In the decade that elapsed after the taking of the first census the population increased by 12.5 per cent, and this growth is still continuing. In 1919 the total population was 9,207,355; in 1929 it was 11,506,207; and in 1937, 14,464,489. The proportion of men to women remains virtually equal. The city of Bangkok, and to a lesser degree all Siamese towns, have made the greatest strides. Bangkok's population is increasing at a phenomenal rate, rising from 518,400 in 1927 to 681,214 a decade later. In all but six *changwads* the population has grown at an annual rate second only to that of the Soviet Union.

In 1914 the Egyptian Statistical Department lent Siam an officer to organize a statistical bureau under the Ministry of Finance. Under his direction various Departments issued statistics, and the early volumes of the *Statistical Year Book* were edited according to the Egyptian model. The first volume, which came out in 1916, had to wrestle with all sorts of practical as well as psychological handicaps. The Ministry of Finance, for example, had a long struggle to get lead type from England during the war, and even enough suitable paper. Twenty years later the number of pages had increased from 225 to 600, and beginning with the eighteenth issue the *Year Book* became bilingual.

The Siamese are not a statistically minded people. Statistics are years late in appearing; and the information they divulge is often naïve, scanty, or unintelligible. It was not until 1933 that hospital statistics were published, and then only for Chulalongkorn Hospital. The Ministries of Finance and Justice offer the fullest data, but no statistics are published by the Ministry of Defense. Information is simply not to be had as to the amount of foreign capital invested in the country. Until 1937 the statistics on religion listed

Christians and Muslims separately, but took for granted that the rest of the population were good Buddhists.

The *Statistical Year Book* is expensive and the edition sells well under a thousand copies. The Assembly has shown that it realizes the necessity for statistical data before embarking on a basic policy for either labor or public health, but it uses the insufficiency of data as a pretext for attacking the Government and ignores the material already available. For years the Andrews and Zimmerman surveys were not printed in Siamese; and when this was finally done, the statistical tables were omitted. In a recent Assembly debate the deputies showed that they did not know even of the existence of these two economic surveys.

### *Distribution of Population*

For centuries Siam's population, like its frontiers, was constantly in flux. Large areas laid waste by war or famine were voluntarily or perforce deserted by the people and thus became barriers to further invasion. In almost every book written by Europeans about Siam, even in the most remote days, the sparseness of the population and its uneven distribution have been noted. Even today 80 per cent of the people cultivate only 6 per cent of the land—and only the best land is under cultivation.<sup>15</sup>

Under-population is a problem common to all the countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula, with the result that there is no pressure of population upon land except in the delta areas. Famine is unknown in Siam, and the standard of living is higher than in other Far Eastern countries. What economic hardship exists is due not to lack of natural resources but to archaic methods of cultivation and to an unchecked death rate. External warfare has ceased for generations; marriages are not delayed; and the birthrate among the people is uncontrolled. Though the local religion does not encourage progeny as in China, India, and Annam, Buddhism only temporarily sequesters the male population. Infant mortality is not so high as in many Oriental countries; but about one-third of the babies die in their first year, and there is a heavy maternity mortality.<sup>16</sup>

Although smallpox vaccination is now general throughout most of the country, 50 per cent of the people have no other medical

treatment except rest and home-made preparations from local herbs, which have little curative value. About 49 per cent of the remaining half of the population follow Oriental medical practices. Thus less than 1 per cent have Western medical treatment, which is available almost exclusively through mission or governmental facilities. However, the Siamese are so prolific a race that the rate of increase in population has been pronounced satisfactory even by the present nationalistic Government.<sup>17</sup> The State is trying to remedy the worst factor in underpopulation—the lack of interest in economic progress and improved agriculture.

The present population is the product of a series of migrations from the north to settlements along the river valleys, where the descendants of these migrants still remain concentrated. All the country's capitals have been situated along the rivers in central Siam, which continue to be the principal channels of communication in a country where forests still cover 70 per cent of the whole surface. All the mountain regions are thinly populated by small scattered settlements of primitive tribes and a few plainsmen, who, in other regions, form the bulk of the population.

The eastern coast of the peninsula, because of its greater number of lowlands and plateaux, is more thickly populated than the west coast, which is more mountainous and has mangrove swamps favorable to the malarial mosquito. This scarcity of population in western Siam, which is only slightly offset by the attractions of tin mining, continues far up the Mekong valley, where the population is concentrated on the alluvial plains near the coast. In middle Siam there is a densely populated area, second only to that of Bangkok, around the Menam delta and along the adjoining plateaux—one of the results of the increased demand for exportable rice. While in northern Siam the population is wholly concentrated along the valley plains, the inhabitants of the Korat Plateau are widely distributed and only slightly shaken up by brief seasonal migrations. The relative density of the rural population is about twelve to the square kilometer in the north, fourteen in the south, and fifty-eight in the central provinces.<sup>18</sup>

With the exception of London, there is no other capital in the world with a larger population in proportion to that of the whole country than Bangkok; and with the exception of Paris, no other

capital has the same psychological hold over the people. Bangkok is so far in advance—in the Western sense—of the rest of the country that provincial Siamese dream of nothing but going there; and once in the city, they can almost never be persuaded to return home. In recent years, however, unemployment and government efforts have been somewhat effective in changing this situation, and the few provincial towns that exist in Siam—Korat, Chiangmai, Chantabun, and Singora—have all shown a marked increase in the recent census.

The typical Siamese village has grown up on the bank of a river, which furnishes the water essential for living and for rice-growing, and which is often the sole means of transportation and communication. Villages having from ten to eighty families, which in turn average about six members apiece, lie so near together in the midst of the ricefields that their boundaries are often hard to distinguish.<sup>19</sup> In the fruit-growing districts, houses, ricefields, and fruit trees are all jumbled together in apparent confusion. The location that seems so casual to the uninitiated eye is determined by the water supply and the distribution and spacing of fields against a bad harvest. In some regions one finds a village situated in a grove of trees in the midst of a rice plain, but it has usually some administrative tie with other nearby villages similarly located. A few isolated farms exist along the *klongs* of the Rangsit area, but they have the same type of administrative organization.

Eighty per cent of the Siamese depend on agriculture for their living; and 56 per cent of the rice production occurs in the Menam plain, where centuries ago ricefields supplanted the forests.<sup>20</sup> Until the development of the export trade the Siamese raised only enough rice for their own needs even in that fertile region. But now their economy has changed, and the population has increased in the exporting areas. In spite of the abandonment of many fields in the mountain valleys, these areas raise 8 per cent of the whole rice production; the Korat Plateau raises 24 per cent; and the peninsula, 10 per cent. In 1934 rice production reached its greatest extension in spite of the depressed market price—a clear indication of the hold that rice has on the country. Even where animal husbandry exists, rice cultivation always dominates.

Wherever level ground is to be found, at least one or two rice

farmers are gathered together. Since the size of a ricefield is restricted by the necessity of keeping it all under the same level of water throughout the season, fields are usually small and surrounded by walls one to two feet high. No terracing is done, except occasionally by the Laos. The latter usually prefer square ricefields, but on the mountain slopes they have to content themselves with long thin strips.

The Siamese settle in the plains because their agricultural technique has been bound to level ground for centuries. They prefer to migrate rather than utilize hilly ground. If they are driven into the forest, they return to the stick-hoe type of cultivation and irrigate only the level areas. This deep-rooted preference for plains is one factor in determining the size of holdings in the different parts of the country. In the Menam valley the average holding is 24 *rai*, but in the central plain it is from 30–200 *rai*; in the north it is 10 *rai*, and on the Korat Plateau and in the peninsula, 6–7 *rai*.

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## XI NATURAL RESOURCES

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### FISHERIES

Fisheries rank second to agriculture in both extent and value among Siam's basic industries. Fish is the most important animal food and the only important protein element in the national diet, and in some form or other it is eaten daily in almost every Siamese household. Siam's innumerable rivers abound in freshwater fish of every variety, and her 2,500 kilometers of coast swarm with abundant sea fish. These marine fishing grounds include three-fourths of the Gulf of Siam, whose shallow waters conveniently confine the fisheries to a narrow belt along the coast. The prosperity of these Gulf fisheries depends principally on the mackerel; but there are also many kinds of anchovies, sardines, tunnies, herrings, and sea mullets. Molluscs flourish in great variety; some of them have pearls, but of no great size or brilliance. The crustaceans in these waters include shrimps, crabs, and prawns, out of which a paste is made. Shrimp from the Talé Sap, which extends from Singora to Patalung, are not equalled in variety or numbers in any part of the world. They could support a controlled industry for many years, but at present unrestricted fishing is threatening their destruction. As far back as 1923 a Singora official reported the seriousness of the heavy catches and recommended ways of regulating the shrimp industry. But no steps were taken to put these suggestions into effect.

Among the reptiles, the crocodiles take a large toll of fish and human life. There is no systematic effort to protect these creatures although their skin is often used for making shoes. Their destruction would be generally useful. Sea turtles and their eggs are highly valued for their oil and shells, but the systematic removal of turtle eggs has been a serious problem in the turtle supply all over the Gulf of Siam. The government has continued to permit their destruction for the sake of the insig-

nificant annual revenue of about Tcs. 400 that is derived from this monopoly. Records show that between 1923 and 1931 the number of breeding turtles was reduced by about 80 per cent. Rapid extermination seems inevitable in view of the existence of an animal as well as a human enemy, the destructive swamp lizard.

The fisheries are all government-controlled and are operated under a license system or by the payment of a fixed annual fee for exclusive privileges, such as fishing over a given area, which is allotted after competitive bidding. An export tax mildly increases revenues from these sources, and for years this has been the Government's sole interest in its fisheries. An attempt was made in 1901 to bring the various fishing regulations under one heading and to simplify the tax system in the industry.

It became obvious in the post-war era that the supply of fresh-water fish, which, in the absence of statistics, had always been regarded as inexhaustible, was threatened with depletion. In Siam no survey had been made analogous to the investigations by French ichthyologists of Indo-China's fish resources. Accordingly, an American expert was engaged in 1923 to study Siam's fisheries and to make recommendations, most of which still remain to be carried out; and scholarships in fisheries were established by Prince Mahidol. When Dr. Hugh Smith left Siam after eleven years' service in the country, he had drawn up as a monument to his labors a comprehensive draft Fishery Law.

As far back as 1925 Dr. Smith declared that the fisheries administration in Siam was highly unsatisfactory. Control was exercised by the Ministry of Finance, without any expert assistance, technical staff, or special equipment. Dr. Smith organized a Department of Fisheries to reorientate the former policy, which had been solely motivated by fiscal considerations; and he succeeded in getting for the new department a complete control over the fisheries. The revenue department's rôle was limited to the collection of taxes on sites, boats, and apparatus. Most important of all, he impressed on the authorities that fish must be regarded primarily as food and not as revenue, and that from both angles the decline in Siam's fisheries was a serious problem.

Except on the main rivers, nearly all Siamese are primarily agri-

cultural and fish simply for their own food. Few boats are used in inland waters, and these are simple canoes made by the men who use them. In both inland and marine fishing, the traps and nets are generally made by the fishermen from materials that can be obtained from the nearby jungle—bamboo, vegetable fibre rope, and a tar from young trees.

In the interior, taxes on fishing are not important; but the Government's monopolies on outlets to ponds and marshes are serious from every viewpoint. At different times the administration has tried to standardize the mesh used in the barriers stretched across the flow so that the smallest fish may escape, but this has been found impossible to enforce. The Andrews Report emphasized the necessity of taking immediate steps to stop further elimination of fish protein from the diet of the rural population.<sup>1</sup> Peasants cannot afford to buy fish, and it must be available to them in case of rice famine.

As a result of the Andrews Report the Government established reserve pond and swamp areas where the use of traps and nets was forbidden; but their number was too small, and supervision was inadequately enforced. In answer to complaints from Assembly representatives from the fishing *changvads*, the Government replied that its policy was gradually to discontinue the fishing monopolies and to revise the rates of taxation; but that the lack of trained men and the budget's dependence on the monopolies to clear out Java weed and to dredge certain waterways made their total elimination impossible for the time being.<sup>2</sup> In temple areas and in places where the livelihood of the community depends on fishing grounds that are a day's journey away, the monopoly has been withdrawn. But it still prevails over far too many swamps and ponds. Nor has it been possible to enforce the prohibition of fishing during the spawning season.

The pond culture of freshwater fish has often been accepted in principle; but except for a state fish-breeding station at Borapet swamp, it is still in the hands of the Chinese in Bangkok. The Government has expressed the hope of founding a Fisheries School and of adding the subject to the curriculum in vocational schools. Such official measures as have been taken so far are quite insufficient.



## ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

*Wild Life*

In spite of her expanding cultivation, Siam is still the home of numerous wild animals related to the Indian fauna. Their location depends on climate and the type of forest, and most of them are incalculably migratory. Elephants, for instance, cannot stand the sun and must return to their dense forest homes in the summer, whether it be in the peninsular, central, or northern mountains. The rhinoceros, on the other hand, lives exclusively in the peninsula. Beasts of prey, such as the tiger, panther, and leopard, inhabit the deep forests, especially those near Nan, except for periodic raids on nearby villages. Less violently predatory but quite as destructive are the lizards, snakes, and insects that consume the farmers' crops. Certain animals, of course, such as the wild ox and the water buffalo, have been successfully domesticated and are now indispensable to agriculture; and in the peninsula certain kinds of ape are used in gathering coconuts.

Elephants alone among the wild animals have been the object of legal protection. Elephant drives were the sport of the Ayuthian kings and are being revived today by a tradition-conscious Government. This means of catching them injures many of the herd, but not until about 1900 did there come a realization that elephants as a species might be dying out. A law passed at this time, which is still in force, prohibited farmers except in self-defense from shooting elephants even to preserve their crops.

Except for the mountain tribes, among whom Buddhism is not deeply rooted, the Siamese have never been big game hunters. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out to the Siamese Government many times, wild life in Siam is in danger of extinction. Experts have amassed figures that show, for example, the alarming slaughter of barking deer in the peninsula by Chinese dealers. Bangkok is the cheapest animal market in the world. Tiger cubs cost \$5.00 apiece; adult leopards \$6.00; cobras three for a dollar; and monkeys 25 to 50 cents each. There is a double standard for pythons; males cost \$3.50 and females only 90 cents.

In 1927 the natural history section of the Siam Society tackled this problem seriously. A law was drafted in 1930, but nothing fur-

ther was done about it. Except in the case of elephants, there is nothing but religious scruples to prevent the killing of any reptile, bird, or animal by anybody, by any means, and in any numbers. Perhaps no other country has been so indifferent as Buddhist Siam to the welfare of its animals. Resting on a negative stand against the taking of life, Siam's religion has not been humanitarian enough to protect it actively. A new appeal is now being launched on scientific grounds. In 1937 the American Primate Expedition joined the chorus of scientists who have stressed the need for some immediate protection of certain valuable species, some of which have already become extinct.

#### BUFFALOES AND BULLOCKS

In traditional Siamese economy animals have never been raised or owned because of their value in terms of meat, milk, or manure. They are chiefly cherished as draft animals by farmers and traders and as such have acquired value as a form of capital.<sup>8</sup> In prosperous times farmers tend to invest in animals almost as heavily as in land. Moreover, during the depression, it was found that they could be liquidated more rapidly than land. Domesticated animals have been informally divided into two categories: bullocks, buffaloes, elephants, and horses, which are considered a substantial investment; and chickens, ducks, and pigs.

Oxen and buffaloes have risen in importance along with the rice trade. The experience of countless generations has taught the Siamese farmer how to train and feed them and their reactions to different climatic conditions; but he knows practically nothing about breeding them or about the prevention and cure of their diseases. The result has been that Siamese livestock is poor both in quality and quantity.

Regional economy determines whether the buffalo or the bullock will dominate. In the Menam valley, which is dedicated almost exclusively to rice, no livestock is kept except for ploughing. Oxen are too weak to work the flooded terrain; there is no pasturage, and the canal system eliminates their importance as a means of transportation. The water buffalo is therefore the work animal in this area. In northern Siam elephants are used in the timber industry. On the Korat Plateau, where there are few navigable rivers and where the

combination of forest and field offers more pasturage and less arable land than in the center, bullocks, and occasionally horses, are raised for the transportation of rice and salt. Only the Chinese and the mountain tribes of the northwest use the small Yunnanese or Shan pony.

This wiry horse has more endurance than its miniature proportions would indicate. It is used primarily as a pack animal in regions where the bullock cart is impracticable. When foreigners introduced horse-racing into Siam, the local aristocracy took to it immediately. Many efforts were made to improve the stock, even to the point of importing Australian horses to breed with the local pony; and the Government opened a horse stud, but it was soon abandoned. The Royal Turf Club came into being on the ground that it would foster horse breeding, but for years it did little to fulfil this obligation. The few efforts it made were already dying before the government tax on racing caused its total abandonment. In the last few years the Ministry of Defense has begun to develop an interest in the native pony, which admirers call a miniature Arab in regard to stamina, courage, and intelligence.

Siamese water buffaloes are the largest in southern Asia. In the inundated plain of central Siam the buffalo thrives and is of far greater economic importance than the bullock, which could scarcely live under such conditions. Nevertheless, the very hard work they must do in the dry, sunny season causes a high mortality among the water buffaloes. The ratio of buffaloes to families is about 2 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

Buffaloes are not raised or sold extensively in central Siam; the farmer prefers to buy them as they are driven down, at the beginning of the rains, from the forests of the Korat Plateau. For all its inaccuracy, Siam's animal census gives some notion of comparative regional ownership.<sup>5</sup> It is calculated that, out of a total of 4,600,000 buffaloes, 43 per cent are in the east and 10 per cent in the north. In the season between planting and harvesting, the buffaloes are idle, grazing on the borders of the fields or wallowing in the canals guarded by naked children, equally idle and happy. During the harvest they are used to draw carts to the field and to help thresh the rice.

Bullocks, which come from almost all the forest areas, are about

equal in numbers to the buffaloes. About 55 per cent are in the east, 13 per cent in the north, and 10 per cent in the west. They are also extensively used in the small rice fields along the eastern coast of the peninsula and fill a secondary rôle in the local sport of bull fighting. On the Korat Plateau they serve as transportation; and sometimes a farmer who has no buffaloes will use his oxen for ploughing. Their hides and meat have come to play an important role in peasant economy. The introduction by foreigners of new food habits among the Siamese, which are now encouraged by the Government, has created a demand in Bangkok and in the larger towns for bullock and buffalo meat, which is also exported in considerable quantities to Singapore and Hong Kong. The dairy aspect of animal husbandry is still neglected. Asiatic peoples have such an aversion to cows' milk that tinned brands monopolize the market. A few Indians and Europeans keep goats and cattle for dairy purposes, but no milk-producing breeds have been developed in Siam.

#### POULTRY AND PIGS

Chickens and ducks have long been raised by the Thais and Laos of the north and northeast, and it is even possible that they were the first people to domesticate the chicken.<sup>6</sup> Ducks are now handled chiefly by the Chinese, whereas the Siamese concentrate on chickens. The Siamese seem to feel less strongly about killing chickens than pigs, and the farmers even use a small proportion of their own poultry eggs. Most of them, however, are sold to the Chinese and to the wealthier residents of the market centers. There are comparatively few fowl raised on the average Siamese farm; Zimmerman estimated that hardly any Siamese family ate as many as three head of fowl or twenty-four eggs a year.<sup>7</sup>

Hog-raising was introduced by the pork-loving Chinese. Every farm has a not too highly pedigreed pig, which the Chinese purchase and slaughter. Fifty per cent of all the hogs are raised on the Korat Plateau, and herds of yearling porkers are driven to the local markets or railroad stations for shipment to Bangkok or Singapore. With the opening of the southern railroad there was a great increase in the pig traffic.

In 1902-3 the Pig and Poultry Farm, which was one of the

monopolies set up in the late nineteenth century, was practically abolished. Thereafter pigs could be slaughtered by anyone who would bring them to the official centers and pay a small fee. At once the State's revenues increased, and the price of pork—a staple food for the Chinese—diminished. At the present time pigs are more of a potential than an actual means of increasing the farmers' income. Moreover, the present Siamese practice of buying young pigs from Chinese traders, fattening them for market, and selling them back again to the Chinese, is far less profitable for the Siamese than pig-breeding would be. Pigs, like poultry, would enjoy a far greater development commercially if there were more markets throughout the country, the development of which, in turn, depends on the building of more roads.

### *Trade in Livestock*

Although the internal market for draft animals has always been important in Siamese economy, it is only within recent years that the export of livestock and the trade in hides has assumed considerable proportions. Before its restriction in 1935 export of hides had attained an annual value of Tcs. 1,000,000, and the export of live animals, including poultry, as much as Tcs. 6,900,000.

For many years the export of cattle to Singapore from central and eastern Siam was handled with great profit by Indians. They were able to penetrate the interior as British subjects enjoying full extraterritorial rights; they were not bothered by regulations with regard to quarantine or care for the animals in transit; and they could buy stolen cattle with impunity and even avoid legitimate payments.<sup>8</sup>

In 1897, 28,000 head of bullocks were shipped from Bangkok. Complaints on all sides induced the Government to take steps, first of all in regard to quarantine. Next the rural police began to check on cattle theft, and finally to insist upon better treatment of the animals generally. In the last-mentioned reform Singapore took the lead by requiring all cattle ships to be properly fitted with stalls. At first this seriously disorganized the trade. Shipowners had no intention of incurring such expense and complained that just such rules as these were depriving British ships of this trade to the advantage of their German rivals.

The Indian cattle-traders were able to get around these rulings fairly well. They began to use the small ports in southeastern Siam, from which they could tap extensive regions in the interior. Bangkok was so neglected that no cattle at all were exported from there until the increased consumption of the Straits Settlement revived the capital's cattle exports. Nevertheless, the Indians were so well organized that they ousted competition and maintained a virtual monopoly of the cattle trade. The 300 per cent rise in the sale price of cattle between 1907 and 1921, which was not reflected in the prices paid to farmers, speaks eloquently of their profits.

#### FORESTS

Forests cover about three-fourths of the country's surface; and except in the central plain, they overwhelmingly dominate the cultivated area. In the peninsula the absence of a clearcut dry season explains the existence of evergreen tropical forests, whereas in other regions very dry soil produces the bamboo. All along the coasts and around the mouths of rivers the mangrove forest flourishes, in company with the nipa palm.

#### *Products of the Tropical Forest*

The tropical evergreen forest, now confined to the peninsula and the region around Chantabun, formerly covered the entire Menam plain but was cut back to permit rice cultivation. The few inhabitants of these densely wooded regions live off forest produce, both as food and fuel, and offer it in barter for such necessities as rice and salt. Oil can be drawn from some of the trees by making a hole three feet above the ground. When the flow ceases, fire is applied to the hole; and when that is no longer effective, another hole is made. This dark brown oil, collected in bamboo vessels, burns easily. It has another widespread use, both domestic and for export, in tarring boats, posts, and torches.

The Siamese forest also furnishes spices in the form of cardamons and valuable resins used in varnishes; but the Government has stepped in to put an end to the over-tapping of these trees, which are found principally in Pattani province. Gamboge, which is the most valuable of the three kinds of resin produced, has considerable value, especially for coloring purposes. Unfortunately, the

prevalence of theft from resin trees has forced the tapper to collect it at the end of six or eight weeks, and the result has been a very low grade. It is sold to the Chinese middleman, who grades it, pays the 10 per cent duty, and exports it to Singapore.<sup>9</sup> When the trees cease to give resin, they are felled and used for the making of furniture. The production of resin is licensed; and the export is valued at Tcs. 250,000 annually, of which about 10 per cent goes to Singapore.<sup>10</sup>

The tropical forest offers many other products of economic importance, notably rattan canes. Forty species of rattan are known to exist in the peninsula, some of which grow to the length of 200 yards. These are exported for use as canes; but domestically they are made into mats, baskets, and furniture. Among the fruit trees, the odoriferous durian is the most vital as food for the primitive forest peoples, and is followed in order of their importance by the coconut, which is used for roofage as well as nourishment, the areca, and the sugar palm. The ipoh tree gives strychnine, with which arrow tips can be poisoned; but its neighbor the chaulmoogra tree counterbalances it by giving leprosy-curing oil.

The soft woods of the tropical forest—rosewood, boxwood, ebony, and the formerly important sappanwood—have only recently awakened the protective instincts of the Forestry Department, which have hitherto been lavished exclusively on the more valuable teak. For years these soft woods have been sent to Bangkok, where they have been extensively used for cheap building or exported with moderate profits by one foreign and one Siamese company. The lease system is not so developed in the south as in the north; permits for extraction range from 2 trees up to 10,000, and the means of transporting logs may be either by a solitary buffalo or by tractor.<sup>11</sup>

The concession of the Danish East Asiatic Company on the eastern shore of the Gulf and around Bandon permits the annual felling of 10,000 trees of medium and hard wood. The whole process is much swifter than that prevailing in the monsoon forest, in spite of the fact that the laborers are Siamese and the elephant drivers Laos. These trees may be felled six months after girdling, and they reach the saw mill at Bandon four days after they start floating down the river. After they are milled, they are taken down to Bangkok during the rainy season in the company's steamers.

The other concession, belonging to the Sriracha Company, has its headquarters on the eastern shore of the Gulf, near the island of Kohsichang. This location is superior in that the wood can be loaded directly into ocean-going ships. This company was founded in 1915 by a Siamese prince largely with Siamese capital; it has a modern transportation system and a sawmill with American machinery and technicians. But so highly mechanized an organization is of questionable value in a country where labor is relatively cheap and abundant and unused to handling machinery or making repairs.

All over the Orient bamboo is of the greatest importance in the lives of the people. The seed of bamboo is used by the forest peoples as a substitute for rice; and it is a very timely one since the bamboo usually flowers in dry years when there is a bad rice harvest. Although the inaccessibility of the forest makes extensive exportation impracticable, bamboos are sent to the Netherlands Indies, where they are used as frames for drying tobacco leaves. For domestic usage, they can be floated down the waterways to densely populated regions, where they serve multiple purposes as fishing stakes, rafts, fences, and house walls. The most recent use for bamboo has arisen as a result of the building of the new paper factory. The experiments made in using bamboo as pulp have been promising, especially as Siam has an almost inexhaustible supply. Bamboo grows on the banks of almost all the rivers and in the forests wherever clearings have been made.

Siam is fortunate in possessing a great wealth of mangroves along the east coast of the peninsula from the Malayan to the Burmese frontiers. In a thin, not wholly continuous strip about 300 miles long, where muddy tidal swamps are intersected at high tide by many waterways, mangroves grow over a total area of about 320,000 acres. These forests are valuable and varied, considering the comparatively small surface they cover. In the region where they grow, from 5 to 10 per cent of the local population is engaged in working their products in the form of timber, attap palm leaves, charcoal fuel, and tanning bark.

In spite of the Penang market's heavy demands for fuel and charcoal, the systematic working of these forests has been very slow in getting under way. They are exploited on permits, and the only method of conservation is simply to close down certain areas



to all felling. The fuel trade is in the hands of the Chinese, who give it such organization as it possesses.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese fuel contractors have regular felling camps in the forests along the larger waterways, where the coolies are housed. The coolies go out in boats, fell the trees, and bring back the logs, which are sawn up at the camps. The contractor pays the coolies 40 *satangs* per 100 fuel billets loaded on board the junks. These boats are sent up the larger rivers by the Penang fuel merchants, who also pay the contractor on the 100 billet basis. The logs are also used locally—by the Chinese, as fuel in their small earthen stoves, and by the tin mining industries of the peninsula. The Government levies a royalty of 10 per cent *ad valorem* on this output.

The charcoal business is also in Chinese hands, has a similar camp organization, and pays the same royalty. Eighty per cent of both fuel logs and charcoal are produced on the west coast of the peninsula. Both trades are very extensive and valuable and give employment to thousands.

The tanning bark business is much more irregular and fluctuating but is still one of the important mangrove forest industries. It is localized principally in the forests north of Trang, near the Burmese frontier. This industry is less well organized than the fuel and charcoal industries, probably because it is mostly in the hands of rice farmers, who do this work during their winter leisure. It is valued annually at Tcs. 65,000, as compared with a value of Tcs. 80,000 in the case of the charcoal trade.<sup>13</sup> One of the chief obstacles to its development lies in the failure of the tanning-bark purchasers to use the wood for either fuel or charcoal. After the bark has been removed, the wood is simply left in the forest to rot. The Government charges the customary 10 per cent royalty on the current selling price.

### *Monsoon Forests of the North*

This type of bare winter forest is found chiefly on the northern mountains, in the midst of which sparse settlements and rice areas are scattered. Only about 10 per cent of the total area is under permanent cultivation. The rest is forest wasteland; and shifting cultivation occurs all over the mountains by nomadic hill tribes, who cut down the trees and cultivate by fertilizing with the ashes of

the charred wood. Except in the extreme northeast, the hill and mountain ranges run parallel to each other, as do the rivers of varying size and temperament that flow in the valleys below these high peaks. Their uneasy beds wind and shift and are sluggish except at flood time—the only time when they are navigable. Their tributaries are also subject to violent rises during the rains, but for the rest of the year they are quite dry. The topography of this region is of vital importance because the logs from the northern forests are floated down these waterways.<sup>14</sup>

The monsoon forest grows on dry ground, in laterite soil; and though it attains great heights, it offers far less variety of species than the tropical forest. Its tallest trees attain a height of 150 feet with a 27 foot circumference. The teak tree grows throughout the northern zone, but only in those localities where the soil and ground conditions are suitable. Though no general survey is available, the total area of the northern monsoon forest covers about 41,000 square miles, of which only about a fourth is teak-producing. However, the economic importance of the teak areas is out of all proportion to their size.

Teak needs a deep, well-drained soil and strong light and seldom occurs in any quantity above an altitude of 2,500 feet. Natural reproduction, which is fair but very uneven, is highly important since the creation of teak plantations has not been undertaken on a large scale. These forests are subject to annual fires, which, though they have the advantage of keeping down the thick tropical underbrush, destroy millions of young teak seedlings and saplings—probably about 10 per cent of the whole. The most extensive plantations, about 300 acres of medium quality trees, are under the care of the Forestry Department at Phrae.

The chief characteristic of Siamese teak is its sporadic growth; very rarely is any large continuous tract of teak found. When the moisture becomes excessive and when laterite dominates limestone and sandstone soil, the evergreen tends to replace teak. Teak grows faster in its youth than later and matures at different ages ranging from 60 to 300 years. It usually takes from 140 to 160 years for a tree to acquire seven feet in girth. In northern Siam teak trees attain as large dimensions as anywhere else in the world; in quantity they are second to the Burmese trees and in quality their equal.

Teak is susceptible to injury from many sources—fire, insects, birds, the bee-hole borer, fungi, elephants, wind, and, above all, mankind.

Records show that the valleys of the Meping, the Salwin, and the Mewang Rivers are the areas that have been worked longest and most heavily. Most of the teak goes down the Salwin to Rangoon or down the Menam to Bangkok; the region around the Mekong has been much less intensively worked. About 1882 many foreigners, notably the Burmese, were attracted to these regions, particularly after the control of teak exports was applied to Upper Burma. The price of teak rose rapidly, and the forests were attacked from all sides. The industry swiftly assumed huge proportions, and by 1897 the forests were so seriously impaired that the government sent for an Indian expert to organize a Forestry Department and to supervise leasing the forest reserves. As a result, exports naturally declined. The extension of French rule further handicapped the industry by checking the supply of Khamu laborers, who were far superior, more hardworking, and 40 per cent cheaper, than the Laos or Karens.

The chief lessees were six European companies, but the working was principally in the hands of British subjects. These companies were financed chiefly from Bangkok, at high rates because the security was none too good. The lender had a first lien on the logs produced and upon the elephants, in which a large part of the capital was invested. Naturally the large firms endeavored to get the leases into their own hands; and in the meantime the forests were wastefully overworked, each lessee being anxious to get out as much timber as possible before his lease expired. Trees were often felled too young or without being properly girdled, and this half-seasoned timber frequently sank before it reached the capital. From 40,000 to 50,000 logs were floated down yearly. The lessees felled trees only near the navigable rivers and never dreamed of replacing them.

However, the Forestry Department, which has now been in existence for more than forty years, succeeded in saving the teak industry in Siam and made it yield large revenues to the Government. At first its regulations, which aimed at controlling leases and restricting the lessees' methods, were misunderstood and were

possible to enforce only after the leases expired in 1909. But in 1913 a law was passed for the protection of the more valuable forests, and nine years later these new rules were applied to the whole country. In January 1939 another law was passed, in face of considerable opposition in the Assembly, reserving certain forests not only for their timber supply but also for the protection of wild life and water courses.

Siam is just beginning to appreciate the importance of permanent forests in relation to climate and rainfall. The Government's new road policy should do much towards bringing the more distant and inaccessible timber nearer the markets; for the greater part of the forests is still unworked owing to the impossibility of bringing out the lumber. Much revenue may be expected from a proper working of these forests, but first of all they require heavy investment and export control.

#### MINES

Time has proved Siam's great reputation for mineral wealth to have been misleading. It had grown out of the legends of Golden Chryse, and through Siam's proximity to the mines of Burma and Malaya. Siam does, however, have small deposits of most of the important minerals, some precious stones, and considerable salt resources; moreover, some of the tin mines of the Malay Peninsula lie within her frontiers.

##### *Iron*

Iron is found nearly everywhere in Siam, though not in sufficient quantities for commercial exploitation, and has been mined for ages. It was formerly extracted in charcoal-heated furnaces; and in the north it is still forged by primitive methods into knives, spears, and utensils for local usage, but never on a commercial scale. The introduction of pig iron and European steel has caused what little industry there was to die out, and the Government is now trying to revive it.

##### *Copper*

Samples of copper ore are still occasionally brought into the Department of Mines from different parts of Siam. But only one

specimen of native copper has been identified, and that occurs in too small quantities to be profitable. This was proved in the pre-war period when a Danish Company for a short time worked a mine at Chantulk, near Korat, but without success.

### *Lead*

Lead is found associated with tin at Pattani. It also occurs in Kanburi in the form of galena carrying a small percentage of silver, but so far not enough has been found to attract investment. Because of their close specific gravity, these ores cannot be separated by the ordinary methods of water concentration. The biggest deposit discovered to date occurs in a limestone mountain in a forest so inaccessible that its exploitation would involve too large an investment. An attempt made by an English company to work the lead mines at Yala failed through the fall in price of that metal just before the first world war. Only the Chinese have mined lead consistently; they smelt it locally and then ship it to China.

### *Tungsten*

Tungsten is found frequently in conjunction with tin, the largest deposit occurring on the east coast of the peninsula. This region was mined during the war by a Chinese company. But after the war the market price fell to a figure at which the mining of tungsten ceased to be profitable.

### *Wolfram*

Wolfram has had an almost identical history. In the early twentieth century a deposit on the island of Kah Samui was worked by the Siam Prospecting Company, but it suffered too much from a fluctuating market to survive. Just before the war of 1914-18 a Swiss firm, backed by German capital, secured a number of wolfram concessions on the east coast and steadily acquired a monopolistic hold on this mineral, which they exported to Krupp. When the war broke out, the same firm was selected to represent the British Government, while the French appointed their own agent. Despite the handicap of lack of communications in this region, the abnormal demand for munitions stimulated the mining of wolfram and scheelite in Siam, as throughout the world; and a mushroom

industry sprang up around the chief deposits along the Gulf of Siam and at Puket.

After the war there was very little demand for wolfram. The export duty on this metal, theoretically 10 per cent, amounted in practice to 40 per cent and made competition with China impossible. The only recent stir in the industry was the alleged theft of wolfram on the Tavoy border in 1934. Certain British subjects were either wilfully or ignorantly extracting ore from Siamese mines. Forty-eight persons were arrested, and investigation revealed that the *nai amphur* had been offered a bribe of Tcs. 4,000 and that unauthorized mining had been going on for six months to the value of Tcs. 134,800.

### *Coal*

Coal exists in the Krabi province of Puket Circle, where a certain amount of capital has been expended to no very good effect. The discovery of coal in Trang province resulted in the formation of a company in Bangkok, but the deposits worked produced a poor grade of lignite and the company went bankrupt.

Political considerations seem to have entered into the operations of the Siam Coal Mining Company Ltd. This venture was notable in that the syndicate was composed entirely of Siamese and included Chao Phya Yomaraj, then Minister of the Interior, who held 11,000 shares; of the remaining 9,000 shares, 8,000 were held by the Privy Purse and 1,000 by the Samsen Power Company. The Samsen stock was a negligible factor, especially as the plant was then under the Minister of the Interior and run by his eldest son; but the Yomaraj interests could not operate successfully without the Privy Purse. The whole set-up was changed by the death of Rama VI and the retirement of Chao Phya Yomaraj; the concession was thrown open to foreign capital, but little has been attracted so far.

### *Gold*

Alluvial gold is found in all the streams of Siam, and in some regions it is washed in small quantities by the Siamese peasantry from father to son as a subsidiary occupation. After the rice is harvested, the whole village goes out on gold-washing parties, quite in a picnicking spirit. On these occasions, each individual makes

about a third of a tical. In the river beds and alluvial land of the north and south it is a more serious occupation, but even there few communities depend on it exclusively. The remains of ancient workings on an extensive scale have been found by modern companies. The Chinese, too, have spent capital and energy, though on a small scale, in the mines of Tomah and Lomsah.

There is almost no wealthy European or Siamese in the country who has not at one time invested in a gold mine, in spite of the consistent failures of European gold mining ventures over the past half century. Ignorance, extravagance, and mismanagement have played the chief role in these failures. In 1850 the celebrated chemist, Pelouse, estimated that Siam's gold production amounted annually to about 500 kilograms; but for twenty years nothing was done to improve the methods of its extraction.<sup>15</sup>

In 1870 several companies were formed; but the results were very disappointing owing to their deplorable administration, the absence of means of communication, and labor troubles. Chinese coolies were good miners but expensive, and the Laos and Siamese were too independent and indifferent to money. Travelers who underwent many hardships to reach the practically inaccessible Tomah gold fields could not resist exaggerating their wealth, and the company that was formed to mine them with a capital of £175,000 went into bankruptcy in 1893. Apparently the more inaccessible and unknown the mine, the easier it was to raise capital and to invite speculation.

The Kabin Gold Mines in eastern Siam were taken over by an English company employing Cornish miners and Scotch engineers, which went bankrupt in 1902. Next came the Bangkok venture known as the Gold Fields of Siam Ltd., which cost English and Siamese investors £70,000 before the war. The Wattana Gold Mines, operated by a French company, also proved a failure. But the faith of the foreigner in Siam's gold died hard. Further concessions were granted in Lopburi and at Nam Koh. Sir Henry Norman held a peninsular concession, and the Duff Development Company dredged for gold in the Kelantan River a generation later. Subsequent efforts by individuals on a small scale have always resulted in the loss of capital.

There has been a slight renewal of gold mining activity in recent years. In 1933 the Siam Tin Syndicate negotiated for a gold

area on the east coast. The latest attempt has been that of a French company with a capital of Tcs. 2,000,000, which applied in the spring of 1934 for a lease of 2,000 acres near Bangnara. There was a long delay before this company, the *Société des Mines d'Or Tchepone*, received its machinery from France; and it is still too early to forecast results. In May 1938 there was a rumor that the Japanese were actively prospecting gold in the Tomah district. The Government then let it be known that it intends to conserve the country's mineral wealth and that further concessions to foreigners will not be readily given.

### *Salt*

Salt has always been an important trade item both for internal consumption and for export. When Crawford visited Siam in 1822, he discussed with the Phraklang the possibility of supplying the Indian provinces with Siam's abundant and excellent salt. "It is chiefly by means of salt," he wrote, "that Siam at present maintains a considerable traffic with Palembang, the Straits of Malacca, and Malaya in general."<sup>16</sup>

In the mountains of southeastern Asia salt is the chief article of the caravan trade, and in such primitive economies it often serves as legal tender.<sup>17</sup> The present total production in Siam amounts to about 60,000 tons and comes from three sources—sea water, salt wells, and the surface crystallization of salt on the Korat Plateau. On the Gulf of Siam from the Menam delta to the Meklong River, the shallow water is used for salt extraction by the construction of ditches and dams to a distance of about 1¼ miles inland. Most of it is shipped by railroad to Bangkok and from there sent abroad or to depots at Lampang and Chiangmai for distribution in the north. Forty thousand tons are exported annually to Singapore and southern China.

The largest salt wells occur in the malaria-ridden northeast and are the centre of a road network there. The two main wells are the meeting place of caravans. During the rainy season the supply of salt increases, but the concentration diminishes. When the quantity of wood fuel needed for concentration becomes excessive, production is stopped; and not until after the harvest in December does the trade pick up again.

A Lao of Nan has the lease of the well at Bo Klua, which is



worked by the underfed Tin tribes as an activity supplementary to rice growing. The salt traders come in caravans of forty to sixty oxen from Nan, a week's journey away. Elephants are used for transportation across the high passes to the west, where salt is bartered for rice and sugar. The Yao and Miao tribes come to the walls with their own animals and exchange their own products for salt, while the poorer tribes from the nearby valleys supply the wood used in the concentration process. Although the production is quite small—only 160 tons a year—it is a very important item to northern economy. The other well, at Bo Huaret, produces about 180 tons annually and finds its markets all along the Mekong valley.

On the Korat Plateau salt is produced by surface crystallization from vast deposits extending into Yunnan and Szechwan. The salt rises to the surface of the plateau in the rainy season, and the heat crystallizes it. The salty sand is scraped off and put in troughs, where the salt is finally washed out. No statistics are available as to the output; but since little white salt is imported, this production must be considerable in order to supply the plateau's 4,000,000 inhabitants.

### *Gems*

For centuries the existence of Chantabun's gem mines has been known; but the secrecy surrounding them, which the French envoys reported in the seventeenth century, has been maintained until modern times. In the nineteenth century these mines were worked on a small scale as a government monopoly; but because the gems were valued as charms and not as jewels, skill in cutting or polishing them was never developed.<sup>18</sup>

About 1850 some Shans and Burmese, who have been indefatigable gem miners for centuries, attracted speculators when they proved that the Chantabun gravels were more valuable than had hitherto been supposed; and about ten years later the Chantabun mines came into the hands of one man, who operated them successfully with his own Burmese and Shan workmen. When the Siamese Government leased the whole area to an English company in 1895, it meant the ruin of this enterprising Shan. But retribution followed. The company soon found that it could not handle the independent and proud Shan miners, who vastly preferred their

own headmen;<sup>19</sup> and the output of the mines decreased. With the cession to France in 1907 of the Pailin district, which produces the finest sapphires in the world, Siam's gem industry ceased to have importance.

In 1918 a new mining fever broke out near Kanburi of sufficient importance to make gem mining the object of certain regulations in the Siam Mining Act of 1919. Nothing but government control came of it for many years. But in 1928 two permits to dig gems were issued, and several thousand carats were unearthed.<sup>20</sup> This success caused a brief revival in the industry, and three new leases were granted the following year. The area is now leased to an Italian, who lets diggers work without licenses and pays them two-thirds of the value on stones delivered.<sup>21</sup> This is not the usual procedure, however. In May 1934 a member of the Assembly criticized the Government for permitting gem mining concessionaires, many of whom were in debt to the State, to charge heavy fees for permits to dig.<sup>22</sup>

### *Tin*

Siam's deposits are the continuation of the stanniferic zone that stretches the length of the Malay Peninsula and contains two-thirds of the world's tin supply. Although it is scattered throughout the peninsula, the island of Puket (also known as Tongkah or Junk Ceylon) originally contained half of all the tin in Siam. The curious name Junk Ceylon, by which this island was designated on the old Admiralty Charts, was derived from the Malay Ujong (Cape) Salang. It was a familiar bone of contention between Siam and Burma, changing hands almost as frequently as Tenasserim.

About 1810 it ultimately became Siamese; but Captain Low's account, written fourteen years after, shows that its prosperity at the time was at low ebb and did not pick up until the latter half of the century. Even under the able Raja to whom Warrington Smyth attributed Puket's most flourishing period in the 1880's, both the roads and the 50,000 inhabitants were in a miserable condition.<sup>23</sup> The taxes were heavy; and the local Government took about 40 per cent of the earnings of every mining coolie, none of which was spent on the island. The decline in Puket's output, which has since become so marked, was apparent even at that time. Puket has defi-

nately passed the zenith of its prosperity; the province of Renong has already assumed equal rank and is followed in order of importance by Takuapa, Pong, and Trang. On the east coast, Pattani formerly held first place; but now Sritemmerat Circle has virtually replaced it. Far behind in the order of importance comes Suratra Circle.<sup>24</sup>

Pottery found in the peninsula shows that Indians worked the mines before the Chinese, who subsequently completely displaced them. Both peoples probably discovered tin on their commercial journeyings back and forth across the peninsula. This discovery marked a change in the attitude of both the Chinese and Indians, who had long valued the peninsula simply as a shorter transit route but later became interested in it for its own worth. The Chinese came and settled near the mines and began to work them on a commercial basis.

The Government has never made a systematic investigation of its valuable mineral deposits. The Chinese have worked, in a primitive way, all the deposits known nowadays to European or Australian engineers; and it has become generally accepted that only tin and tungsten are worth mining, and then only industrially since veins are of no importance in Siamese mining. Most of the ore is won from the sediment in the rivers that pass through tin-bearing rocks. Such deposits occur not only along the waterways but over the alluvial valleys in varying quantities. This type of deposit is found mostly near the west coast, but similar deposits occur on Puket Island. There the alluvial land surrounding the central mountain, and even the bottom of the sea nearby, are so rich in tin that seven companies are still exploiting it very profitably.

### *Fuel*

The lack of fuel resources is Siam's greatest single obstacle to industrialization. There is almost no iron; and although coal exists, it is in the form of a lignite of poor quality. Periodically the discovery of new deposits is reported, but they have never proved fit for mining.

For years wood was the principal fuel employed, but even its limited use by the state railroads threatened Siam's forests with exhaustion. Rice husks still serve to a large extent as fuel, and in

the years of good harvests there is a marked decline in petroleum imports. The idea of harnessing the rivers of Siam's northern mountains to generate sufficient electricity for the semi-manufacture of some of the country's raw materials has been virtually abandoned. It is the general belief that Siam is too flat a country to provide adequate water power. Nowadays only four or five of the urban centres have electricity; and although in 1939 the Government announced a hydro-electric project for Kanchanaburi, the absence of other larger agglomerations of people makes further electrification most unlikely in the near future. A few years ago experiments were undertaken to utilize the Java weed as a cheap motor spirit. As this weed was introduced into the country about 1900 to beautify certain gardens, and as it has remained to multiply many million-fold simply to obstruct navigation and harm the fisheries, the Government would find doubly attractive the possibility of using it as fuel. So far, however, no reliable information as to the results of the experimentation have been available.

In the 1880's kerosene oil, the great civilizer of the East, came into Siam to replace, in even the poorest homes, the smoky, fitful torch. For years the Asiatic Petroleum Company and, to a lesser extent, the Standard Vacuum Company enjoyed the exclusive right to import benzine and kerosene into Siam; and during the last few years the value of such petroleum imports has averaged annually slightly under a million ticals. Through these companies Siam was supplied from British Borneo and the Netherlands Indies oil fields.

Immediately after the World War Siam began to take an interest in developing such oil fields as she might find within her own frontiers. Naturally the two oil companies were vitally concerned, especially as it was obvious that the Siamese were not going to let any foreigners get control of such important resources, assuming that any existed. The first step the Government took was to revise the extraterritoriality aspect of her foreign relations so as to permit such exploitation; and after arduous negotiations, the most recent treaties of 1937 have admitted Siam's right to establish an oil monopoly.

It has long been believed that exploitable petroleum exists in northern Siam. On different occasions prospecting has been done

there—by an American in 1925, and a decade later by two Swiss geologists employed by the Siamese Government. On the latter occasion it was thought that the survey was connected with a government project to develop an organization to handle petroleum products. This rumor rocked the two existing companies to their foundations, particularly as they had barely recovered from a threat of Russian oil competition three years before. That fear had probably been the decisive factor in their agreement not to raise the price of petroleum products after the tical was devaluated. Nevertheless, in May 1933, the Social Oil Company, an agency of the United Petroleum Company of the USSR., was actually formed in Siam with a capital of Tcs. 500,000.

The following November a mining engineer, J. Davies, published a paper about the large deposits of shale oil in Siam. He thought it might satisfy that country's needs if the price of petroleum should increase sufficiently to make its exploitation possible through a new and less costly process than the old.<sup>25</sup> A year elapsed before the fears of the foreign petroleum interests were given a new stimulus. The call for tenders to erect several oil storage depots seemed to indicate that the Government intended either to enter the oil business as a competitor or to establish a monopoly.

The Liquid Fuel Section of the Ministry of Defense, which was established at about that time, succeeded in effecting a 20 per cent saving in the price of liquid fuel. Alarms were temporarily lessened, however, by the dismissal of a suit brought against the Standard Oil Company by the Privy Purse Department for Tcs. 24,000 damages in connection with a fire that destroyed fifteen small shops.

But foreign interests did not long enjoy their tranquillity. Luang Bipul, the Minister of Defense, in a broadcast in March 1937, clearly stated that the entrance of the Government into the oil business was prevented only by the monopoly clauses in the existing treaties, which were then in the act of being revised. This was the first official public statement of the Siamese Government's aims in this respect. The Minister seemed further to indicate that Siam's oil situation could be corrected only by increasing her military forces. The foreign companies took consolation from the belief that the State would still have to purchase oil from outside firms,

just as they did; and that in all likelihood the inexperienced Government would not be able to do it so cheaply as private firms.

In view of all these ominous indications, the Liquid Fuel Act of March 1939 should not have been such a shock to the foreign oil interests. The distillation of liquid fuel, which was defined as all refined products of petroleum, was thenceforth reserved exclusively to the State. But the administration's original intention of providing only for its own petroleum needs underwent a profound transformation. The new refinery plant, built at Jong Nonsi with Japanese technical advice and equipment, began functioning early in 1940 and will supply all Siam's petroleum needs with the exception of kerosene. Since its capacity is 200 tons a day, which is at least five or six times in excess of official requirements, the ultimate purpose and destination of the surplus has excited much speculation.<sup>26</sup>

When this law was promulgated, the Government merely intended to enter the distributing field in competition with the existing companies, though not on equal terms. Actually, however, the new law so drastically curtailed the activities of the private companies that they threatened a complete withdrawal. It included a storage provision and a strict system of import permits on a quota basis; and commercial importers were required to take out long-term licenses, which made it difficult for them to secure release under a five-year period. It also empowered the Minister of Economic Affairs to fix wholesale and retail prices, either for the whole country or for a given locality.

Although the Government obviously anticipated an eventual monopoly of the whole field, it was expected that the foreign companies would continue to function in the interior. But the strong stand taken by the Asiatic Petroleum and Standard Vacuum Companies in their refusal to continue to do business in the country unless some new arrangement were negotiated forced the Government to take over the entire monopoly sooner than it had intended.

Early in June it was announced that a compromise had been reached; but the Government proceeded to assert that a delay in decoding instructions from London constituted a breach of contract and used this as an excuse for raising its terms. The State now demanded to sell 25 per cent of kerosene and diesel oil and 50 per

cent of gasoline in the first year, instead of 10 per cent in the former case and 30 per cent in the latter, as in its original proposal. On July 30 the Asiatic Petroleum Company announced its decision to close the company's Bangkok office, and the Standard Vacuum Company followed suit later.

No more oil will be imported into Siam by a foreign company; only Siamese oil, called *sam tabarn*, is to be sold. The move has been popular in every sense; it pleases Siamese patriotism and suits the Siamese purse. Until the price was forced up by the war and the destruction of oil stocks in two fires in the fall of 1939, gasoline was retailed at 18 *satangs* per litre, which was cheaper than the price charged by the foreign firms.

Recently, however, there have been complaints of a shortage and of the poor quality of the oil sold by the Government. A project is now under way to develop Siamese shipping for the export of Siamese rice across the Pacific in exchange for return cargoes of oil.

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## XII · AGRICULTURE

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### *Production*

Rice farming in Siam today is the product of Khmer teaching in the 1,500 years preceding the Sukhothai period, and of evolutionary Siamese practice during the centuries that followed. The Khmer system of wet land farming was more extensive, and possibly better, than the present system. It took rice to build Cambodia's temples, and more rice to maintain them.

The civilization of Siam was also founded on rice; and rice still maintains a fundamental position in her economy and consequently in government revenues and politics. It is the principal food for every class of people and is the main animal fodder as well. Rice is indispensable in ceremonials; the morning greeting in Siam is "Have you eaten your rice?" It was on the basis of the ownership of rice-fields that noble rank was formally graded.<sup>1</sup> Rice has been the chief cause of civil litigation, and many of Siam's wars were fought because more ricefields were coveted. Moreover, the erratic and indecisive character of these campaigns was largely due to the necessity for sandwiching fighting in between the farming seasons.

The Thais planted rice on leveled fields near their villages and worked the flooded land with buffaloes and oxen.<sup>2</sup> Their primitive implements—the wooden plough, the iron ploughshare, and the harrow—were also employed by the Mons, Khmers, Burmese, and Annamites. It is strange that all these people brought these implements with them from the north, where the civilization was based on dry cereals, and then proceeded to use them for rice culture modeled after the Indian pattern.

Their methods of conserving the water supply, either by building walls around the level fields or by digging small reservoirs or canals, showed that the Thais could adapt themselves to natural conditions in all but the central plain, where they never developed



the technical ability to cope with such enormous quantities of water as they found there.

Two kinds of economy thereby evolved: one based exclusively on crops, and the other to a greater extent on livestock. The former prevailed wherever there was enough suitable land, and the latter developed on plateaux and high hills that had no alluvial soil. In this way rice economy came to dominate the Menam plain and the river lowlands of the southern and coastal regions. Animal husbandry prevails on the rim of the Menam plain in the high valleys of the northern mountains, but most of all on the vast Korat Plateau. Other crops in addition to rice are almost universally cultivated in small gardens near the house or on soil unfit for rice-growing. These secondary crops play a large role in regions where animal husbandry prevails because of the greater variety of the soil that is found there.

Siam is made up of three regions of almost self-sufficing agriculture and of one commercialized district in the center.<sup>8</sup> In the former, commercialized agriculture exists spasmodically near the larger towns and markets, and in these areas the major problem is generally the development of further sources of cash income. On the other hand, the commercialized agriculture regions need principally to develop diversified farming, with more home production of items of consumption. By raising more food at home the commercial farmer could lower his living costs and increase his cash income without diminishing his rice production. Siam's failure to effect this was clearly shown by the decline in tax revenues during the depression—the official counterpart of the longer-standing difficulty of the individual farmer to make private ends meet.

In the north the chief crop is glutinous rice, which is the main article of diet and represents one-third of the total income from crops. Around the larger towns, where communications are easy, the farmers also grow a certain proportion—about 30%—of non-glutinous rice for sale; and if market prices are high, they may even send it to Bangkok.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere only an insignificant amount of non-glutinous rice is raised by the northern people, for use in cakes or sweets.

The land fit for rice farming in the north is small compared with that in the centre. The sandy soil requires plenty of rain or

irrigation to assure even one crop a year of two of the three varieties of rice—early, medium, and late—that can be raised on the Menam plain. Non-glutinous rice takes only four months to mature, whereas glutinous rice takes four and a half. Great famines, however, are unknown now; and in addition to rice some other crops can always be grown—tobacco, *miamg*, and a variety of vegetables and fruits. But they are neither well developed nor regularly rotated. The quality of the non-glutinous rice raised there is the equal of that grown in the center. All the other crops, which are now raised almost wholly for home consumption, could be increased and commercialized. There is still a great deal of unused land in Bayab Circle that could be made arable if properly irrigated.

In the north the farmers have come to appreciate the necessity for seed selection, at least to the extent of not mixing glutinous with non-glutinous rice since it lowers the market price.<sup>5</sup> No bought fertilizer is employed by the farmers of the north, and manure is used only where the water supply is very irregular or the soil extremely poor. Nature has taught these farmers something about improved agriculture, but science could do much more. Vegetable crops need labor-saving devices and proper irrigation to enable Bayab Circle to supply the Bangkok market. Oranges, which are now imported, might also be grown in the north. Tobacco could be improved by destroying insect pests. Now the farmer fights only the large worms, picking them off by hand; and no other method is used to control crop parasites. More attention to manuring and to irrigation and better farm equipment are the ultimate desiderata for so sandy a soil. A beginning could be made by better seed selection for paddy, tobacco, and vegetables; and, more important, new crops could be introduced.

On the Korat Plateau there are only a few rivers, and these go dry after the rains are over. Because of the long, hot, and dry summers there are only very meagre crops of maize, cotton, tobacco, fruit, areca and betel nuts, and rice, of which the last mentioned is 70 per cent non-glutinous. Tobacco is the crop second in importance to rice, and it is grown over a small area on the banks and islands of that river. Far more water could be conserved by deepening the swamps into reservoirs and by linking the small to the larger streams. This would make possible the raising of more crops

and the rearing of more livestock. What is now grown exclusively for home consumption could be expended commercially.

The south is a green jungle, largely undeveloped, with great variations in soil level and rainfall, to which the farmers adapt the variety of rice grown. Vegetables and fruits are the two most important commercial crops. Other crops are rice, of which 98 per cent is non-glutinous, tobacco, and maize. Although rain falls throughout the year, irrigation would greatly increase the area available for rice in spite of the fact that farmers make little real use of what they already have. Economically it would be better if the south were supplied with rice from the central plain and could concentrate on its great potentialities for producing fruit and rubber. The chief products are coconuts, cassava, palm oil, betel nuts, and peanuts, many of which are produced with almost no cultivation. With little effort the people collect their food from the soil and obtain from their crops an income that is now nearly double that of the relatively hard-working farmers of the northeast.<sup>6</sup> But when prices are low, they do not bother to collect their coconuts or to tap their rubber trees. In the case of vegetables also, the people make almost no use of their opportunities; a second crop, along with animal husbandry, could be readily developed. Manila hemp (abaca) and pepper, which is now almost non-existent, could be introduced. The need for diversified farming can hardly be exaggerated.

There is a general lack of interest in agriculture in the south because mining and rubber pay so much more. Formerly much copra was produced, but now many of the coconut trees have disappeared. Under-population and the prevalence of such diseases as malaria and dysentery are two important causes of the backwardness of the peninsula's agriculture.

Seed selection in the south is non-existent, and fruit-farming methods are rudimentary. Though the soil is sandy, little manure is used except by the Chinese near Singora. Nothing at all is done about insect pests. Farm animals and agricultural implements and methods are much the same here as elsewhere; but since living is even easier, the farming is correspondingly more negligent. Even the animals work less here than in other regions.

The great and only crop of the centre is non-glutinous rice.

Near Bangkok, however, fruit, tobacco, and vegetable gardening are important for the capital's market. In some, but by no means all, parts of the central plain, peas, beans, and maize are produced for home consumption. The unique characteristic of the crops of the central plain is that they are almost wholly grown for sale. There is a high degree of regional specialization, and home production of food is fast disappearing. The farmer still has enough spare time and soil to be able to produce most necessities, but he lacks the energy in spite of the fact that his income is smaller than are his wants.

### *Farming Technique*

Even a brief survey shows the necessity for developing a diversified crop system in Siam. Zimmerman concluded that three-fourths of the whole area was unfit for rice culture; and that in those areas cotton, tobacco, silk, and improved fruit and forage crops could be raised, not only for local use but for export.<sup>7</sup> Such attempts as have been made to improve agriculture have not gone far enough. Teaching the farmer must be done in a language he understands, and its practise repeated under expert supervision. Agricultural bulletins are inadequate even in a more literate country, and the rare man who has gone to an agricultural school is apt to relapse into traditional methods once he returns to his farm.

Siam's climatic and soil conditions vary a great deal, but there are certain agricultural practices common to all regions. During the winter season the fields are hard and broken. The stubble is eaten by buffaloes or burnt as fertilizer, and only the green palmyra palm persists. In June, after the first rains, the ground is prepared for planting by plow and harrow. The rice can either be sown or transplanted from seed beds; the latter method is more difficult, but it yields more and is more frequently used.<sup>8</sup> Only on heavily flooded fields, where harvesting must be done before the height of the flood, is the method of sowing seed preferred. Farmers will plant a certain area in fast-growing varieties, prepare the rest of their land, and then plant the main crop, putting in afterwards as many more of the fast-growing varieties as the weather permits.

Sowing is also done on the large rented lands around Rangsit, where labor costs are kept low. The farmer who has only family

labor uses the more intensive way of cultivation without extra cost. The experience of generations has adapted the time and region used for planting to local conditions. Various floods determine the maturing times of the different kinds of rice, and the plants usually grow at the same level as the river, keeping their ears well above the rising waters.

During the rainy season the farmers relax—all but the small boys in the family who must scare the birds away from the rice fields. There is little in the village to break the monotony of damp heat and isolation by flood, except malaria, gambling, and dacoity. All become busy once again at reaping time, when the work is done together and all the neighbors help. Aside from this communal effort, the Siamese farmer is highly individualistic; there is no collective construction of dams, canals, and roads, as in China.

Harvesting lasts for weeks as all the ears do not ripen at the same time. The rice is cut by sickles, gathered into sheaves, loaded into carts, and drawn to the winnowing ground; methods in the peninsula differ slightly according to Malay practices. Threshing takes place in the fields if the ears dry in time, or in the yards. There the sheaves are strewn out and trampled by buffaloes and oxen, or the rice is beaten out in bamboo nets. After the winnowing, the grain is stored in specially constructed huts, where it awaits the dry season before being transported to the nearest market or railway. During the excessive heat the animals must be driven to higher altitudes; buffalo and bullock camps exist in the north. By January or February the agricultural cycle is finished (except in the peninsula where the rainy season begins in September and ends in May).

### *Fertilizer*

Continuous annual cropping with paddy is exhausting to the soil when practically nothing in the way of manure is used. Moreover, continuous irrigation is apt to lead to an alkaline soil condition in which nothing will grow.<sup>9</sup> Most of the land has lost its first fertility and has been reduced to a level of productivity that now appears to be fairly constant.<sup>10</sup>

Three of the elements essential to good soil—nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash—are often deficient in Siam. Experts have not

yet experimented sufficiently to find out what is the most economic crop for each region, but it is known that the soil of central Siam lacks nitrogen and phosphorus. Large increases in yield could be obtained if these missing elements were supplied. All phosphate fertilizers that have been used give increased yields, whereas other kinds have done so only temporarily.

The problem of fertilizers has been under investigation since 1921, but a great deal more experimentation is needed; the introduction of high-yielding strains renders the use of fertilizers more necessary than ever because such crops deplete the soil more rapidly. The Rangsit Experimental Farm has done some good work, as well as various firms to which land has been allotted in order to demonstrate the value of their fertilizers. Experiments with buffalo manure have been negative but might be more successful if the animals were fed more richly and storage methods were better. In many cases the amount available for the farmer's use is sufficient for only a fraction of his holding. Bat guano, fish waste, bone meal, and oil cake would all give increased yields; but the price is too high to make them an economic proposition.

Until recently artificial fertilizers have been too expensive for the Siamese to use, especially in view of the low price of paddy. However, market conditions are improving; and at the same time the cost of this new class of fertilizer, especially adapted to swamp paddy soils, has declined. Thus it has become a paying and even an essential factor. In 1937 the Siamese Government engaged a soil expert, Dr. R. Pendleton, to make a soil survey of the whole kingdom in order to determine the type of agriculture proper to every variety of soil.

From 1906 to 1924 the arable land in Siam increased 124 per cent, but the instability of weather conditions has not yet been offset by irrigation. In 1923 the area planted was 3,631,500 acres, and before the depression there was only one small break in this advance, in 1928-29. After a brief relapse during the depression, the acreage under cultivation again began to increase steadily. But the increase in production since 1906 has been only 68 per cent, just half of the increase in area. The growth of exports encouraged farmers to make rice-fields out of land subject to uncertain weather conditions. Quantitatively, the most important area is the Menam

plain, which produces about 60 per cent of the total crop; eastern Siam produces 25 per cent; and the north has only a small percentage although it stands high as regards production in relation to the size of the area planted. Except for the west coast, the fields of the Menam plain give the smallest return per acre; but they have the best facilities for transportation and export. The average yield for the whole country ranges from 1340-1670 lbs. per acre, but it differs enormously even in adjacent regions. With the rapidly increasing population it is essential to accelerate the yield as well as to expand the area under cultivation. Nevertheless, increased rice production is not the primary problem nowadays. The quality of the crop must be improved and standardized, as well as the technique of its distribution.

### *Power Farming*

The Siamese farmer usually makes his own plough and share, and this crude instrument breaks quite easily. In spite of its poor wearing qualities, it is effective in paddy fields where heavy imported ploughs are useless. An improved plough, which was designed by the Department of Agriculture, is made of steel. It is heavier than the native plough and does the same work in less than half the time. Unfortunately, however, it is not widely used.

For some years the Department of Agriculture experimented with tractors and found that the results varied with a multiplicity of factors, such as the season of the year, the type of soil, and the depth of ploughing. The ordinary farmer only scratches the soil to a depth of three inches, and this has bad effects on the subsoil if done year after year. Tractors, ploughing to a depth of seven inches, rip up the hard pan underneath; but at the same time they bring to the surface unoxidized subsoil, which makes the first year's yield smaller than usual and tends to discourage the farmer. Tractors for ploughing and harrowing are most useful over large areas. Five *rai* require ten buffaloes and ten men six hours and eighteen minutes to work, whereas a crude-oil tractor driven by one man can work the same area in two hours and five minutes. Although there are a number of farms in Siam successfully operating tractors, the high initial cost will always place the tractor beyond the reach of the individual farmer unless he is helped by

the cooperative system or acquires it under some contract or share arrangement.

The problem of machine-harvesting, a necessary corollary to an increase in the area sown, has not yet been solved. Its lack of success, compared with machine-ploughing, is due to the unevenness of the fields and the tendency of the ripe paddy crop to stall the machine. Threshing machines are used on government farms, but they have the disadvantage of breaking as much as 3 to 6 per cent of the grain. The ordinary method of threshing by hand or by means of buffaloes results in fewer broken kernels and has every recommendation where the time factor is important.

The problematical success of power farming, along with the nationalistic policy of keeping money in the country, has until now prevented the government from wholeheartedly endorsing the complete mechanization of rice farming.

### *The Middleman*

The export of rice was started almost a century ago by a few Chinese millers, who were rapidly followed by European firms, all of them staffed by Chinese. By this means a small demand for paddy was created in the neighborhood of Bangkok, where the mills were supplied directly by the farmers themselves. Today paddy, which brings in 70 per cent of the government's revenues and on which three-fourths of the population depend directly for their spending power, is in Siamese hands only as regards production. Its purchase from the cultivator and its transportation to the mill are carried out by the Chinese, who also handle much of the export. Dr. Carthew, the paddy expert, startled the Bangkok Rotary Club in 1931 by telling them that no Occidental firm could exist without the indispensable link the Chinese formed between buyers and producers.<sup>11</sup> When market conditions are normal, the power of the middleman is not excessively felt; but the depression placed the farmers and millers in a precarious position.

Paddy is cultivated in very small plots consisting of from eight to twenty acres per farm. Most of it is bought from individual farmers by Chinese brokers, a few baskets at a time here and there. Except in the northeast, where paddy is sold by weight, most of the farmers measure rice in baskets called *tang*, which vary in size



from village to village though they are approximately identical within the same village.<sup>12</sup> To change this, the Government introduced standard weights and measures, and since 1921 it has published the prices and quantities of rice sold at Bangkok. But this has not helped matters for the peasants, who cannot understand any price except when it is quoted to them in very local terms by the paddy dealers. For the most part paddy reaches the mill in individual boatloads of about twenty tons or less, and the method employed is the reverse of economic. In all stages of the transaction the farmer suffers most, and through him the State's revenues.

The depression, which accentuated the Siamese farmer's poverty of purse and agricultural technique, aroused the conviction that some of his troubles could be laid to the baneful influence of the Chinese middleman. The Andrews Survey concentrated on this problem and found that the evil agency of the Chinese had been greatly exaggerated.<sup>18</sup> They are primarily business men and only secondarily creditors. Chinese paddy dealers on some occasions make more than legitimate profits, but some compensation is merited for their enterprise, hard labor, and ability to compete with other dealers. In their turn the farmers often borrow rice and food when prices are high and pay it back without interest after the harvest is in and prices are down. This was true of the situation at the outset of the depression. Later the traders tried to make up for this loss by collecting in payment more than a fair share of the crops. On the whole, the system is not unfair; the real source of the farmer's misery can be attributed fundamentally to his unimproved technique and improvidence.

Local paddy dealers usually own a number of granaries for holding paddy supplies that are not sold to the mills until prices rise. So many uncertain factors enter into this situation that this business obviously lends itself to speculation. For example, one of these factors is the amount of damage done by insects as a result of poor storage methods. In 1932 the loss thus incurred was estimated at Tcs. 20,000,000—a sum sufficient to have endowed Siam with a good road system.<sup>14</sup>

Generally the farmers do not know any rice prices except such as are offered them by the local dealers; for in spite of spasmodic official efforts to inform them they are not aware of Bangkok

prices. The middleman buys most profitably in the regions that are farthest from the centers of communication. Moreover, the Siamese farmer's chronic need of money often leaves even those best informed with no option but to accept what is offered by the dealer, who has frequently bought up the crop before it is sown.

A saving grace in the whole system is the competitiveness of paddy buying, which drives down the profits of the business. Low margins are still profitable because the dealer's overhead expenses are at a minimum. He and his family usually live on a boat and do all the work themselves. Competition often forces the dealer to pay a good price for paddy; and the additional hazard in the market price and the heavy interest rate—not lower than 10 per cent—that he pays on the money he invests in paddy show that he too is fundamentally defenseless. In the Siamese rice industry there is no futures market through which a dealer may guarantee prices. A government commission, appointed to investigate the situation, reported that "the close relation between Bangkok and up-country prices indicates that the peasants, as a whole, are receiving competitive prices for their rice."<sup>15</sup> In brief, the picture is not so bad as is popularly supposed.

From the miller's viewpoint it is difficult to obtain the quality of rice he wants since he lacks direct contact with the farmer and must deal exclusively with the Chinese broker. There are 4,000 varieties of paddy grown in Siam, but only a comparatively small number—about 36—can be milled into high grade rice suitable for export to Europe; and of these, only a few can be mixed so as to produce a high grade of rice.<sup>16</sup> Because the Siamese farmer, until about eighty years ago, always planted for home consumption, he still thinks in terms of the kind of paddy he himself prefers and continues to sow many varieties.

Another problem facing the miller is the widespread practice of adulteration on the part of the Chinese brokers. Before the war Siamese field and garden rice were quoted separately on the London market, and Siam Garden No. 1 represented a very high quality. In the early 1920's it was called to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture that, because of the free mixing of rice, both kinds were being lumped together and quoted as garden rice, with the result that the whole reputation of Siamese rice was suffering

seriously. The fact that Siam grows the best quality of rice in the world was again proved at the Regina Exhibit in 1933, where Siam won eleven out of the twenty prizes in the rice classes. In spite of this Siamese rice is still listed among the three lowest grades in the world market, and the most serious efforts of the authorities to control the trade seem to be confined to stamping all letters with the assertion that "Siamese rice is the best in the world." Although it cannot be sold as a high grade rice but only as chicken feed in any wholesale market, the very same rice, after it has been remilled, screened, and graded, can be sold under another name at much higher prices.

The absence of standards can be attributed to two factors. The first is the speculative rather than steady methods that characterize the Chinese handling of this industry. A list of the bankruptcies in the rice trade, as kept at the Registrar's Office for the past twenty years, is proof of this statement. The second cause is harder to remove because it is based on certain market demands. About 75 per cent of Siamese rice is exported to tropical countries, which, unlike Europe, care nothing about its appearance. There is no objection raised there to the presence of the red grain that depreciates its price in the European market even more than does the mixture of qualities.

One solution of this problem—to reduce the rôle of the middleman by the establishment of provincial mills—has long received official favor. If rice were milled in the district where it is grown instead of being shipped to Bangkok, there would be less danger of mixing. Before the depression the growth of up-country mills, from 200 to about 500 in four years, was considered a very hopeful step towards re-establishing the reputation of Siamese rice abroad; but the trouble was too profound to be so easily remedied. The millers, it appears, were themselves not wholly without sin.

#### *Rice-milling and the Middleman*

Most of Siam's rice mills are twenty years old, and their outmoded machinery is not fitted to make the best of poor quality grain. As the mills are largely in Chinese hands, their labor is also Chinese. Of the 71 mills in Bangkok before the depression, 59 were run by steam, 10 by electricity, and 2 by motor power. Even in a

prosperous period all these mills could never keep running at the same time, and during the depression it was obvious that there were far too many.

From the outset the classification of paddy by millers and farmers has been different, and the millers' task of classifying for sale is a very important and technical one. There are five grades, of which the most ordinary contains 75 per cent and the best only 5 per cent of broken rice; meal rice is divided into two kinds—cargo and white. It was probably true, as the millers frequently asserted, that they would prefer to mill only the better grades because they brought higher prices. But when the millers discovered that a degraded quality of rice was accepted by shippers and could be passed off as long-grain Siamese rice, they began themselves to mix; and the practice is still gaining ground.<sup>17</sup>

In December 1928 an important dispute arose between the Chinese millers and the foreign rice buyers about the contract terms for selling rice to Cuba and Europe.<sup>18</sup> The buyers proposed revising the methods of payment and classification because of complaints from their Western clientele about the poor quality, underweight, and lack of uniformity of Siamese rice, which had already led to a drop in exports to Europe from 25 to 10 per cent of the total export. After the world war buyers had proposed a new contract with the millers, which provided that the rice purchased should be of the required quality and correct weight and that the rice should be delivered to the buyers' premises where its weight and quality could be verified. The millers objected on the grounds of risk of fire, theft from cargo boats, delays in payment, and the difficulty of getting reliable compradores at the mills—all of which risks the buyers said they were willing to assume. Moreover theft was always paid by the cargo-boat owners although the trade in stolen rice had become quite a well-developed industry.

The buyers' proposals seemed reasonable enough, but in their relations with the millers the essential element of mutual confidence was missing. Actually, the Chinese millers were being adroitly excluded from the rice-exporting business by means of skilful banking arrangements effected by the foreign exporters. In other words, rice exports were controlled by European shippers; and the Chinese, resenting this exclusion, were unwilling to relin-

quish their equally strong position in control of the buying and milling of the paddy without some equivalent advantage. Concerned wholly with their immediate advantage, the Chinese were not sufficiently acquainted with world market conditions to appreciate objectively any general advantages the new proposals might have for the whole trade. The future of Siam's rice trade still depends on a practical solution of this fundamental controversy, in which racial and ethical differences between buyers and sellers reduce the most vital element in Siam's economy to a matter of personal rivalry and struggle for the greatest profit. The Government is now making determined efforts to eliminate the Chinese middleman by buying paddy directly from the farmers and is also beginning to enter the milling and export trades.

#### *Marketing: Internal*

Rice production per family averages 2,600 litres of paddy in the south, 6,500 in the north, and 8,250 in the center.<sup>10</sup> In the south and northeast less than 20 per cent of the rice crop is sold, and then usually to neighbors. In the north 40 per cent is sold—some to neighbors and some to Bangkok, the proportion depending on the variety grown.

Although the Laos prefer glutinous rice, the other Thais, most Asiatics, and all Occidentals prefer the non-glutinous variety. For this reason the market for glutinous rice is comparatively undeveloped. Non-glutinous rice can be grown on the same ground as glutinous; and after the north of Siam was connected with the capital by rail, the areas growing non-glutinous rice for sale increased greatly. The further expansion of this non-glutinous crop depends on the increase of means of communication; for there are almost no rice mills in the north in spite of the fact that labor is cheaper there. It is possible to send rice down to Bangkok unhusked because, unlike the more perishable fruit and vegetable crops, it can survive the slow water and bullock transportation.

The northeast still remains the most economically self-sufficient area although the recent extensions of the railways there will soon change this. The peasants cultivate rice, vegetables, tobacco, and cotton almost wholly for their own needs; and practically every house has a weaving loom. What surplus they produce is bartered,

usually for salt, with neighboring villages. Such wages as exist are paid in rice, which is the standard currency of the region. As marketing is largely in the hands of the women, who themselves carry the goods to neighboring villages, the commercial radius is strictly limited. Most of the provincial communities are far away from the regional centre, Korat; but in the dry season trucks bring out matches, cotton, and kerosene, and carry back pigs as return cargo. Other commodities are not worth the cost of transportation, and cattle are driven south on foot.

Agriculture in peninsular Siam has had quite a different history. In spite of unusually propitious soil and climatic conditions, the production and marketing of crops has been adversely affected by the meteoric growth of tin mining and rubber plantations. Moreover, the Government long neglected to supply any means of land communication in the peninsula. Sailing ships and junks in these regions have always had to contend with the monsoon season, especially along the northern coast; and modern vessels of deeper draught are further handicapped by heavy lighterage charges and by the silting up of rivers and the mouths of harbors through the tin mining processes. When the southern railway was built to open up the peninsula, its freight and passenger rates were so high as to discourage trade with Bangkok. Sea transportation to Malaya continued to be the cheapest carriage, and until very recent years Penang remained the clearing house for peninsula imports and exports.

What trade existed was in the hands of foreigners as the peninsula towns were too isolated to tempt the Bangkok-loving Siamese to go there unless in official capacity. Population did not grow in the ancient trading marts of Pattani, Singora, and Nakon Sritemmerat, which had prospered greatly in the seventeenth century. Only Puket continued to flourish because of the tin trade, until it became the largest city, with a population of 25,000. Mining was also responsible for the high cost of living in the peninsula since its higher profits turned people away from rice cultivation and food crops generally. For years rice was imported thither from Burma because communications were easier than with central Siam and because Burmese rice was more economical to use as it swelled more in cooking. The depression and restriction measures in tin and rub-

ber production temporarily caused their partial abandonment in favor of copra, which had formerly been a large crop.

The visit of the king and queen to the peninsula in 1933 drew public attention to its agricultural possibilities, especially as the slump demanded a stocktaking of the national resources. As a result, a few more roads were built; and now the Government is urging everyone to have kitchen gardens containing a minimum of five chickens and two papaya trees. But so long as rubber and tin are remunerative and living is possible without great effort, the Government will not have much success in promoting new food crops there or in developing scientific agriculture. In the last few years exponents of economic nationalism have made a determined effort to attract trade from Penang to Bangkok by lowering railroad freight rates and by building more roads. If the Government succeeds in stimulating the Siamese to interest themselves in either the scientific production or business-like marketing of crops, the peninsula offers the richest field for endeavor and the greatest possibilities for achieving the goal of self-sufficiency. •

Development of means of communication is the *sine qua non* of marketing and increased production, and this was the special emphasis of the Andrews Report of 1934-35. Not only are local paddy brokers mixing Siam's rice to the detriment of its world reputation, but dealers in Hong Kong and Singapore are doing the same thing. Standardization of exports can be effective only if they are shipped directly from Bangkok to their markets. The costs of transportation could be materially lowered by the development of the port of Bangkok so as to make it accessible to ocean-going steamers. Rice millers now have to pay 25 *satangs* for each bag of rice conveyed from the mills to the ships.

Moreover, the present lack of such a port has been a contributing factor in the Siamese ignorance of the rice trade. No Siamese has ever learned that business well enough to assume responsible control of a storage system, standardization, or sales. If the Government starts its silo system at the present stage, it will have to put it under foreign direction, which would defeat its whole object. Sending young Siamese to business schools or agricultural colleges is useless unless they can gain practical experience; and a long apprenticeship in rice-trading offices is now possible only for the

very few Siamese who can be sent to Singapore and Hong Kong.

As soon as the port of Bangkok is made available to world shipping, it is anticipated that Siamese business houses will be established to handle the rice trade and that they will eventually be controlled entirely by Siamese.

*Marketing: Foreign*

The treaties inaugurated by Bowring brought about a profound change in the economy of the central provinces. In the course of only a few years the people turned almost wholly to rice culture for export. The growth in the area under cultivation doubled within a comparatively short time, and only once during the depression did it temporarily shrink.

Siam's sudden dependence on rice is the more significant when it is realized that, although her annual crop places Siam in fifth place as a producing country, the total amount grown annually is roughly from 40-50,000,000 quintals, or only slightly over 3 per cent of world production. Burma is the largest exporter of rice in the world; her total export is more than that of her nearest rivals, Siam and Indo-China, combined. She has an area of 12,500,000 acres under rice and an output of 7,500,000 tons, of which over 3,000,000 tons is exported. Siam's rice acreage is 7,500,000 with a 5,000,000 ton output, of which the average annual export is about 1,500,000 tons. Indo-China has a larger total area under rice than Siam, but her output per acre is not equal to Siam's. These three countries together have an annual exportable surplus of between 5,500,000 and 6,500,000 tons. All of them used to look chiefly to the European market before 1914; but they subsequently found that the Far East, with its enormous populations and indifference to first grade quality and appearance, was their best market. In competing with her two neighbors, which have protected markets in the mother country, Siam's only advantage remains the superior quality of the rice she produces.

Foreign markets are the most pressing problem of Siam today, and in the last few years they have undergone many changes. Rice is the staple food of at least one third of mankind, yet Western nations are apt to neglect it because it appears so little upon their commercial horizon. During the five years from 1926 to 1930, the



importing countries of western Europe, which had been the big pre-war markets, absorbed only 12 per cent of the world rice trade; and although since 1926 world rice prices have shown a downward trend, the real slump did not begin until September 1930, some months after that of wheat. World rice production in the 1926-1930 period was ten times greater than in the five years preceding the war, whereas the corresponding increase for wheat was 14 per cent. The latter is a comparatively moderate percentage because rice is a native crop whose cultivation in small holdings and by primitive methods has changed little, whereas wheat-growing has been revolutionized. Rice production is increasing at about the same pace as the population, and it was almost entirely the decline in the latter's purchasing power that caused the general depression in rice.

With the depression came an accentuation of the policy of economic nationalism that has been conspicuous everywhere since the war. Unlike her competitors, Siam enjoys no protected market in time of stress, whereas the imperialist powers have become their colonies' best clients. The most-favored-nation clause is being omitted from their treaties, and by quotas and duties they have taken to bargaining just like business houses. The amount of Siamese products that a country will import henceforth depends on the quantity Siam buys from that country. In both the Chinese and Cuban markets Siam's lack of bargaining power has been keenly felt in comparison with that of her neighbors. During the depression low prices and not quality became the decisive factor in selling.

The decline in China's purchasing power, due in part to military operations and banditry, was chiefly allied to the fall in the value of silver. Although this affected adversely the three rice-exporting rivals of Further India, it worked to Burma's advantage because her currency followed the depreciated sterling. By 1933 the steady fall in rice prices caused the greatest alarm. Although the best grade of paddy was milled for Singapore and only a middle grade sent to Hong Kong and China, the latter were quantitatively Siam's best market. Thus, when southern Chinese ports placed a tax of a dollar a picul on rice imports, Siam felt that disaster was imminent.

In Siam's case, China's motives were more political than economic—a retaliation for the alleged ill-treatment of Chinese in Siam. The Chinese situation in itself was distressing enough; but almost at the same time Japan, Malaya, Ceylon, and the Netherlands Indies began taking active measures to encourage local rice-growing and to prohibit the entry of foreign rice. In a petition addressed to the Canton Government in August 1934, the Chinese rice exporters of Siam pointed out that China had always imported more rice from Siam than elsewhere, and that native rice crops, in Kwangtung at least, far from needing protection, had never sufficed for that province's needs. Nevertheless, the duty imposed was not cancelled. Indo-China was gaining on Siam as provisioner of the Chinese market, not only because Saigon rice was cheaper and nearer, but because of a treaty that France had finally concluded with China in 1935 after five years' negotiations. France's superior bargaining power on behalf of her colony was the decisive cause; China was willing to buy Indo-Chinese rice if accompanied by arms and munitions. However, Siamese exports to China have not suffered in regard to quantity to the extent anticipated but have been considerably reduced in value.

Japan's barrier against Siamese rice has been psychologically, if not economically, as important as the narrowing of the Chinese market. Until the end of 1933 Siam had a treaty giving preferential rights to Japan, and the Japanese Government intervened only to maintain stocks and regulate imports to keep the price steady. The prohibition of Siamese rice in the Japanese market was probably the most influential single factor in making Siam wary of Japan's current advances. The vernacular press came out strongly against permitting Japan to acquire paddy land in Siam. In 1937 the embargo was temporarily lifted, and in 1939 a rice shortage in Japan caused heavy buying abroad; but Japan still represents no steady, dependable market for Siamese rice.

Just before Japan prohibited the entry of Siamese rice, a minor blow had fallen from the decision taken by the Netherlands Indies in May 1933 to import rice only under special permit. The extent of this trade is hard to evaluate because so much is re-exported from Singapore in addition to the direct annual trade of between Tcs. 6,000,000 and Tcs. 9,000,000. For Burma as well as for Siam

the Netherlands Indies had long been only a small and constantly dwindling market, but the sudden decline of rice exports from 92,684 tons in 1934 to 14,086 tons the next year came at the time when Siam's markets were already dwindling elsewhere.

For many years Singapore had stood second, and India third, on the list of Siam's clients; Singapore's rice imports amounted to about 25 per cent of the total as compared with the 35 per cent absorbed by Hong Kong and China. But as early as 1929 it was apparent that Malaya was following Japan and Java in their policy of encouraging local production at the expense of foreign imports. In October 1933 an import duty of fifteen cents a picul was imposed on all rice, and this applied to Burmese as well as to Siamese and Indo-Chinese rice. Since imperial preference did not function here, it was natural that Siam should be optimistic about the sudden growth of the Indian market. But the fact that she captured both the Indian and Cinghalese markets at Burma's expense proved to be Siam's undoing.

Early in 1934 India, which had already served as a dumping ground for Japanese rice, threatened an embargo on both Siamese and Indo-Chinese rice. But since she probably feared retaliation from these countries, both of which were good customers, particularly for her jute products, the embargo failed to materialize. In 1933 India took 2,823 metric tons, and in 1934, 36,525 tons—the shipping being mostly in Japanese bottoms. Both Siamese and Indo-Chinese rice sold from 8 annas to a rupee cheaper than either local or Burmese rice. As soon as it was realized how much Siam was cutting out Burmese shipments, this rapidly expanding trade became the object of great agitation in Rangoon; and the cry was taken up by rice-growing interests in Madras. Both together made vehement and effective protests during the next Assembly session at Delhi.

Before taking legislative steps, the Indian Government decided to try negotiating with the Siamese and French Governments. It was pointed out that the few thousands of tons of rice exported to India by Siam and Indo-China did not represent any considerable proportion of their export trade. Although it was 18.4 per cent in quantity, it was only 15.4 per cent of the value of total exports; and that hardly warranted depressing the rice market at Madras.

In Siam, however, the mere threat of India's imposing a tariff on Siamese rice, followed as it was by the closing of so many markets elsewhere, provoked a serious lingering strike among the rice coolies of Bangkok.

Finally, in April 1935, the Indian Government decided to risk reprisals and to impose an import duty of 20 rupees a ton on broken rice—the very grade that Siam could supply to the poorer classes of the people. In India itself, when rice becomes dear, many of the people turn to substitute foods, with the result that the price of rice remains fairly steady. Burma was now free to recapture this market in safety, but a rice shortage in 1936 forced India to buy again from Siam and Indo-China.

Siam was given a slight breathing spell before her next market, Cuba, threatened to collapse in 1936. For years Cuba had given preference to Siamese over other rice, but she now proposed to raise the duty on Siamese rice if Siam failed to buy 25 per cent of the value of her rice export to Cuba—annually worth Tcs. 10,000,000—in Cuban goods. The varying degrees of Siam's purchases in Cuba would determine the sliding scale of duty on Siamese rice. Unfortunately Cuba had only one commodity, sugar, that Siam could buy; and that would not amount to even a quarter of Siam's rice sales. It would also mean the end of Siam's purchases from Java and a serious obstacle to the development of her own sugar industry. A trade exchange seemed hardly feasible. Siam did succeed, however, in getting the higher tariff postponed for six months; and when it was eventually applied, there was no special discrimination against Siam. This tariff wall has not proved so much of an obstacle as was feared. In 1937 Cuba took 79 per cent of her rice imports from Bangkok; moreover, in 1939 the duty on Siamese rice was slightly reduced.

Siam has found partial, if transient, consolation in capturing three temporary markets in the Philippines, Peru, and Tunis. In 1936 a considerable part of Siam's rice exports went to the Philippines for the first time in a decade because of a failure of the insular rice crop. Tunis, naturally, is normally within the French imperial radius; but Peru may possibly become a permanent market. In 1937 that country absorbed Tcs. 165,000 worth of Siamese rice.

Siam's prospects for rice markets are not bright, especially in

view of the prevailing economic nationalism. Yet Siam showed during the depression that she was not discouraged by low rice prices and actually increased the area under cultivation. In the last five years, except for one bad harvest, the rice export has increased steadily; and the proportion of rice exports to total exports has declined equally steadily. The chief difficulty lies in the growth of high grade rice cultivation in increasing quantities in the Americas and in Spain, which makes a return to high pre-depression prices unlikely. As countries like Japan, Java, and Malaya are more and more growing their own rice, Siamese imports are doomed there except in poor rice years. India and Ceylon are marked off for imperial preference. In the Chinese market Siam suffers from competition with the cheaper and more accessible Indo-Chinese rice, especially after the piastre's devaluation in 1937. More and more in open markets, such as Cuba, Siam has nothing with which to bargain for a lower preferential tariff. Obviously Siam must not look wholly to an increase in production as a solution to her marketing problem but must play up her great asset—the quality of her rice. There is an imperative necessity for the Government to help in effecting this change.

### *The Government and Agriculture*

Under the old régime there was much talk and little action about improving agricultural output, the farmers' status, and the methods of marketing; under the constitutional Government there has been even more talk but also more action in these same fields. But it was the depression, rather than any change in the form of government, that was responsible for this—at least verbal—relinquishment of a laissez-faire policy. The sponsoring of cooperative societies, the development of irrigation, the institution of the agricultural research department, and, more recently, the elimination of the middleman have been the chief governmental contributions to the improvement in production. New means of communication, publicity as to market prices, standard weights and measures, the attempt to find new markets—all these represent the official effort to remedy deficiencies in the marketing system.

Years of education and experience are still required to effect any kind of reform in commercialized agriculture as the Siamese people

are wholeheartedly agricultural and are psychologically disinclined to devote time or energy to trade. The Government can help them by bettering vocational training; but the rice business cannot be learned theoretically. Depression measures, such as government buying and an official guarantee of the price system, do not solve the marketing situation; the fundamental need is that it should be placed on a competitive as well as a cooperative basis.

The Bowring treaty represented the first radical step taken by the Government to release agriculture and trade from the feudal system of monopoly and privilege. Up to that time the Government, through its tax-farmers, used to buy up certain products and resell them at higher prices. Pepper, for example, was bought at Tcs. 8 a picul and sold for Tcs. 12. This procedure destroyed individual initiative and militated against the production of a variety of crops.

Although it was the treaties on the Bowring model that destroyed the straitjacket of privilege, it was the substitution of steam for sail navigation that made possible the profitable export of bulky materials of low value like rice and teak. So rapidly did the State's revenues rise as a result of this revolution in Siam's economy that it never occurred to the Government to intervene. Agriculture was no concern of the administration's. The farmer knew his own business, and all the State had to do was to see that he paid his taxes. In 1900 a suggestion that the Government establish an experimental farm in order to get definite information about climate, rainfall, and soil composition fell on deaf ears.<sup>20</sup> A few agricultural exhibitions were held, but nothing more was done except to institute a register for rice-land ownership.

The Ministry of Agriculture has lived through more than the usual administrative vicissitudes. Originating in the old Royal Council instituted in the fourteenth century, it was abolished in 1892 in favor of an arrangement that lasted until 1932. The Sixth Councillor was put in charge of agricultural matters, but this meant little more than that he ran a land office for collecting imposts on paddy and for the issue of title deeds—which was a particularly sorry failure. Under it was also placed the work of surveying. Such fine work as was done was due to its director, McCarthy, who, in addition to his other labors, ably trained Siamese assistants.

The Department of Mines was also placed under the Ministry of Agriculture, which drafted the first mining regulations. But the Department of Agriculture proper was not a success. Some of the produce taxes were farmed out, and others were collected by the Government. In each case methods that were bad in the beginning grew worse, with the result that revenues, which were steadily increasing, fell into hopeless confusion.

The Ministry was broken up in 1897, and its various departments were transferred to the Ministry of Finance. After remaining there in abeyance for two years, they were again revived independently. Once more, owing to faulty administration and insufficient supervision, the Ministry fell into complete incompetence. In 1902 the phoenix rose again, in an attempt to get Japanese experts to revive the silk industry; but after a few years the experts returned home, leaving Siamese agriculture and sericulture as unscientific as ever. However, with important changes of personnel in the various Ministries there was a gradual realization of the importance of land questions, especially of irrigation in lower Siam. It was recognized that the State must provide for its growing population and also keep up with the rising competition of neighboring rice-growing countries, whose agriculture was being fostered by more energetic Governments. In 1915 the first annual paddy report was published.

The first expert engaged, Homan van der Heide, sent in a report urging the importance of dry land crops, of irrigation, and of a general agricultural policy. Everyone politely agreed that it was an excellent report, but it aroused little interest in official circles. The proposals seemed too big, and it was assumed that the farmer who could produce Siamese Garden Rice needed no further teaching.

But Prince Rabi, when he became Minister of Agriculture, was sufficiently aroused by Heide's report and by three successive crop failures to engage a second expert, Thomas Ward, whose suggestions were also pigeon-holed.<sup>21</sup> Not until fourteen years later was even a part of his scheme completed. The Government did not seem to realize that in Siam agriculture should be the main concern of the State; the Minister of Agriculture for years confined his activities largely to inaugurating the planting season by personally

directing the Ploughing Ceremony. The plough, the seed, and the bullocks were all blessed by the priests, and the few sods that were turned up by the Minister were sprinkled with holy water.

In agriculture, as in so many other fields, the world war forced the official hand. The unique position of rice in Siam was due to its being not only the country's chief export and the principal food of the people but also the means by which the Government met its foreign obligations. The crop failure of 1919 came at a most inopportune time, when the prices of all articles of consumption were rising swiftly. The situation early developed abnormal features owing to the enormous world demand for foodstuffs generally, the replenishment of stocks depleted during the war, and the stimulus to exports from a rapidly rising exchange. The high price of rice, although good for the farmers, had disturbing effects on the rest of the population, who were mercilessly exploited in purchasing their staple food. A bag of rice cost Tcs. 60 in Siam, whereas it sold in India for less than 40 rupees.

The lifeless import market reduced the note currency of the country, and the result was that the rice millers paid for their paddy in gold leaf, which had heretofore been used exclusively for hoarding and for merit-making in the gilding of sacred images. Every fournisseur took advantage of the situation to put up his prices. Finally, when it became known that the rice merchants in Siam had contracted with importers in May 1919 to send enormous quantities of rice for distillation to Japan, the Government stepped in. A rice controller was appointed to put an end to speculation, and in this way the hoarded supplies were released for food.

The Government's intervention proved to be very costly and fairly incompetent, and this was given as an added reason for relapsing into the old inactivity when the crisis was over. In 1918 seed paddy was distributed in areas devastated by floods; but the Minister of Agriculture had failed to obtain anything like an adequate supply, and the farmer was given a modicum of seed and the balance in money—which in no way solved his problem. Everyone agreed that the distribution was badly—not to say dishonestly—managed, and that the seed was poorly chosen.<sup>22</sup> Administrative machinery was apparently lacking to find and buy the grain, and the Ministries were unable to work together. The only



real success achieved at the time was the relief work started by the Irrigation Department. No report was published by the Relief Fund Committee, into which contributions had poured, especially from the foreign community.

The administration of the Rice Control was an additional burden on the Government because of the sale of sterling that the Treasury was forced to make to assure, at least partially, the banks' demand for cover for remittances. Three years elapsed before this sum was recovered. Other losses in both direct and indirect revenue were increased, to the extent of several million ticals, by expenditures of the Board in distributing rice and money to the farming class. All of this confirmed the Government and public opinion in its laissez-faire inclinations.

A residue of the Government's rice control effort was the experimental farm at Klong Rangsit. A Bureau of Agricultural Science was next founded in 1923 to study soil conditions, to fight parasitic insects, and to experiment with fertilizers and new implements. In 1924 the Minister of Commerce, Prince Purachatra, noted "with serious concern" the decline of rice exports to Europe, which he linked to the deterioration in their quality. After a cursory study of the situation, the Minister of Agriculture reported that the quality of rice grown in Siam had not deteriorated but had even improved in some sections; and that to minimize the harmful mixing of varieties, a standard grain would be adopted after experimentation. For the first time this concentrated attention on the nefarious role of the Chinese middleman and the serious indebtedness of the Siamese farmer. In the year 1926, when the rice trade was at the height of its prosperity and formed 80 per cent of the total exports, the position of the farmer was little better than that of a serf. But no one seemed concerned, least of all the farmer himself, who did not really feel the pinch until 1930.

### *The Cooperative Credit Movement*

In 1916-17 the Ministry of Commerce determined to take steps to remedy the peasants' lack of capital and of organized institutions, which made them the prey of the moneylender. No one seemed to think that the moneylender himself had very indifferent security.

Since he had no banks nearby where he could deposit his funds, the farmer kept his money on his person or hidden in his house. Moreover, when the farmer borrowed money, he usually did so for consumption purposes, without any thought of increasing his productive capacity. For this reason he needed, in addition to capital, special training in order not to abuse credit. Though the Siamese were well-to-do compared with many Asiatic peoples, capital was not liquid in rural regions; and the interest rates were so high that in a short time mortgaged land changed hands.

In the first year of the cooperative movement only sixty societies were started as an experiment. Among the villages chosen for experimentation was a thickly populated group near Lopburi, where exportable rice was being increasingly grown and where the usurer reigned supreme.<sup>28</sup> Simultaneously another group was selected in a sparsely settled region near Pitsanuloke, where the people were poor and had only recently migrated from the south. Vacant land was plentiful, and the cost of clearing it did not take much capital. It was pointed out to both groups that as a community rather than as individuals they could get more credit at lower interest rates—12 per cent instead of 22 per cent—with which to buy more land and better equipment. Membership ranged from 10 to 50 men; all were required to live in the same village, to know each other well, to have a good peaceable reputation, and to be literate enough to keep accounts.

In 1916 the financing of the movement was undertaken by the Siam Commercial Bank to the extent of Tcs. 300,000, which was guaranteed by the Minister of Finance. In 1929 an additional cash credit of Tcs. 200,000 was granted; and a special law on cooperative societies, passed the year before, indicated that the movement had passed from the experimental stage to a legal status. The societies had grown regularly but slowly until by that time there were 129 groups with 2,157 members. The care that was exercised in admitting new members, the limiting of credit strictly in accordance with the needs of the groups, the auditing of accounts by a government registrar, and the training afforded in self-help and thrift, were all factors making for the success of the cooperative movement, in conspicuous contrast to the large-scale failure of an analogous movement in Burma. The main drawback was the

limited scope of these societies; for caution was long regarded as the indispensable element in their success.

The great flood of 1917 and the drought of 1919 retarded the repayment of loans and consequently the founding of new societies. Much more fundamental in checking their expansion was the fact that their financing was done by commercial institutions and that the Government confined its role to auditing, supervising, and underwriting a very limited credit. The Zimmerman Report in 1930-31 advocated strongly the extension of these societies as rapidly as possible; but the Government, presumably forgetting that its goal was the improvement of the agricultural situation, gave as an excuse for not extending the work when it was most needed the fact that the depression had so reduced farmers' income that they were unable to repay their loans.<sup>21</sup>

It was true that there were definite drawbacks and that more education was needed to change the people's general attitude. Members were inclined to look on the society as a moneylending concern in which they did not care to reinvest their funds after their own immediate problems had been solved. Inspectors, however, reported a marked improvement in the members' standard of living.<sup>22</sup> Rice could now be held for sale in the community until prices rose and no longer had to be sacrificed to the immediate need for money; and members squandered their money less when they had it. Hovels had become wooden houses; and gambling had decreased in cooperative villages because such thriftless members were a cause of mutual ruin. The movement was a solid, if not a spectacular, success, thanks to the initiative of the absolute monarchy. When the depression came, however, it was realized that its first sponsors had not nourished it substantially enough to develop it into a general solution to the farmer's problem.

### *The Depression and the Farmer's Indebtedness*

The improvement of the status of the farmer was taken by the depression out of the realm of theory, where it had been discussed for a decade, into the foreground of government policy. For long critics had vainly complained that even the slight amount of scientific experimentation accomplished by the Government had been neither sufficiently publicized nor practically used by the farmers.

Because of lack of education and economic individualism, the vast majority of Siamese could not understand the published results; still less could they make any experiments themselves. So long as they could get government jobs, the better educated Siamese had no intention of engaging in farming, which was a hard and lonely life bringing in at best a precarious income.

Prince Siddhiporn was an outstanding exception to the rule that educated Siamese scorned agriculture as a profession. He forsook a career in government service to promote scientific agriculture through his own efforts and resources. His fortnightly magazine, *Kasikorn*, or Agriculture, which ran for four years from the date of its founding in 1928, had a wide circulation, especially among school children. In it he tried to stimulate their interest in agriculture in story form, and also to instruct adults by giving publicity to such discoveries as agricultural research had already made. The king supported this publication by subscribing for a thousand copies. Prince Siddhiporn also maintained a large farm in Radburi Circle where practical agriculture was demonstrated. His beneficence extended to distributing high grade poultry and agricultural produce at ordinary prices, and his annual exhibits illustrated the agricultural possibilities of the land.

In a speech at the Rotary Club in September 1931, the prince emphasized the necessity of finding more money for agricultural research and of ending the government's laissez-faire policy. If the state had only taken measures in regard to three points—credit facilities, quick communications for the farmer with the Bangkok market, and the establishment of fixed standards for rice and paddy—its revenues would not have slumped; and the farmers would not have found themselves in so precarious a position.<sup>20</sup>

The government had not been altogether idle in the face of the depression. As a result of Prince Purachattra's visits to Far Eastern markets, the Department of Agricultural Research and the Department of Commercial Intelligence had been founded. Two more committees were appointed in an attempt to raise permanently the status of the farming community. This was to be achieved chiefly by building up the cooperative system, by supplanting the middleman, and by developing the postal savings banks. People still buried their silver in the ground; and if they exchanged it for

paper notes, they found it even harder to keep. In the last days of December 1930 a large representation of the rice exporting firms was called together by the Minister of Agriculture, and their advice was sought as to how to improve Siamese rice in so competitive a world market. The only result of this meeting was a promise given by each person present to submit a memorandum to a commission that the Minister would appoint later. For the first time the government acknowledged that either it must find new markets for rice, or an alternative crop must be grown. Efforts to standardize the quality exported were futile without a corresponding attempt to control the whole trade.

In February 1931 the Minister of Agriculture started a campaign to teach the farmers through local officials that poor crops were the result of pests rather than of evil spirits. At the same time insecticides and new implements were distributed. This was the first step taken by the Department of Agricultural Research to establish contact with the cultivator and to substitute personal for literary instruction. The depression had brought an alarming decline in the average production per *rai*; in 1931 the yield of 4.23 piculs per *rai* was the smallest in 10 years and compared most unfavorably with the rice yield of from 13 to 16 piculs per *rai* achieved by French farmers in the Rhone delta.<sup>27</sup>

A month later the Ministry of Agriculture seemed on the eve of long-awaited changes. Its transfer to the department of the energetic Minister of Commerce was an emergency measure taken just before Prajadhipok's departure for Europe. Much housecleaning was slated for the Department of Agricultural Research, now under the direction of A. F. G. Kerr. Unfortunately, however, this promise of action did not materialize. To balance the budget, agricultural research was sacrificed. Seed selection, which had been carried on in thirty different parts of the country, was halted; the tobacco experiments at Chiangmai were abandoned; the farm at *Klong 1* was closed; and only half the work at *Klong 6* was utilized. The Bangkok Noi Fruit Farm likewise had to be shut down before anything valuable had been learned from the work done there. Of the six experimental farms projected by the Agricultural Research Department, only one could be realized. The chemical and entomological laboratories were working only half time

and were threatened with complete stoppage. Yet at the same time that the Siamese were cutting down expenses in this field, India, Burma, and Indo-China were all turning to agricultural research as the best means of counteracting the depression.

A program for the cooperation of all those involved in the rice trade was worked out by the Commission appointed by the Minister of Agriculture at the abortive conference of millers and exporters in December 1930. This program was chiefly the work of Christiansen and Jensen and was taken over bodily by the constitutional régime when it came into power. Its chief objective—the elimination of the middleman—was to be accomplished by standardizing the kind of unmixed high-grade paddy that the millers wanted and by helping the farmers to organize a union through which the rice would be classified and shipped directly to the mills. Paddy was to be graded by the farmers themselves, either in their villages or at the railroad godowns; and in this work the millers were to cooperate by testing samples sent to them by the farmers' unions, on which they would also quote prices. Paddy would no longer be sent down in bulk, but in bags with labels showing the origin, destination, and weight; both bags and scales were to be supplied by the milling firms. Money would be loaned against property guarantees to cover the rail charges in sending paddy to the mills.

The Government's rôle was to relieve the cultivator of the burden of his debt by extending the cooperative movement. The societies would enable him to get improved implements at reasonable prices, help him dispose of his crop by establishing silos, utilize vacant land for economic development, and increase trade both in the quantity and variety of articles exported. After toying with Luang Pradit's radical schemes, the Government announced in August 1933 that it would not resort to any nationalization of the land or forced labor as the means of economic development. Not a dissenting vote was lifted against the excellence of the official program, but from time to time a wistful query was raised as to the extent to which it had been realized in view of the unending official silence on the subject.

In November 1932 a communiqué was for the first time addressed to cultivators by the Ministry of Agriculture, with the

object of showing them that the new Government was taking the farmers' plight seriously. According to the official statement some reduction had already been effected in taxation. The Government further announced that it was about to arrange for more loans at low interest rates to encourage the cultivation of crops other than rice, to abridge some of the fishing monopolies, to increase irrigation facilities, and to attempt to improve marketing conditions; in short, the administration wanted to show that it was in touch with the people's needs. In terms of actual accomplishment, the Government had reduced taxes, chiefly because they could not be collected at the old rates, and had taken special measures to supply pumps and erect dams. The rest of the communiqué was pure exhortation and aspiration.

The problem of more credit to the farmer had not been solved because the creditor had even less security for lending than before. A law passed in September 1932, which prevented the seizure of the farmer's crop and cattle for debt, attempted to give him more security; but the general result was more harmful than beneficial as it dried up the sole source of the farmer's credit. The State did not offer to buy up land at fair prices with the proviso that the farmers could buy it back later on the instalment plan. Most of the farmers had long since ceased to pay interest on their debts and were now wholly concerned as to how to get enough money simply to carry on. Obviously there were only a few farmers who could adjust their own affairs, but so far government aid took the form of moral encouragement exclusively.

The relation between currency and the rice trade had been clearly demonstrated during the last years of the old régime when Siam, after six months' hesitation, decided to follow the sterling devaluation. Although the immediate beneficiaries of this step were the millers rather than the farmers, it subsequently led to periodic agitation for further devaluation of the tical. However, Siam's financial soundness had long been an established policy; and the majority of Siamese were inclined to think that tampering with the exchange had proved no permanent solution. Since the prices of all imports had risen immediately, even the millers' benefits were of short duration. The whole problem of rural indebtedness had thereby become more acute, and there was fear that the farmer

might be discouraged from raising crops for sale by the low export and high import prices. The Government was urged to carry out the positive measures in its economic program, such as improving the quality of Siamese rice, controlling shipments, and encouraging other crops both for home consumption and export.

The farmers' indebtedness was at the core of the whole economic crisis. The related problems of improving his technique, eliminating the middleman, and seeking new markets, all of which the Government found it easier to tackle first, were comparatively insignificant. The cooperative movement had not solved the problem of how the mass of farmers could obtain the credit necessary to carry on from one year to the next. Nor had the recently initiated postal savings banks as yet instilled general habits of thrift.

In the absence of complete current statistics, to estimate rural indebtedness in Siam one must rely on the data garnered by Zimmerman and Andrews and on the reports of the cooperative societies. In 1931 Zimmerman estimated the total agricultural debt at Tcs. 143,360,000. Four years later the vernacular paper *Sri Krung* put it at between Tcs. 80,000,000 and Tcs. 90,000,000; and Andrews estimated it at more than Tcs. 100,000,000—a value probably greater than that of the land itself. This figure was unchallenged in the Assembly when the debt situation was discussed in 1937–38. The value of the land mortgages in Siam registered at the Land Records Office amounted to about Tcs. 20,000,000, but these comprised only mortgages on land held under title deeds that were issued at the time of the cadastral survey. The amount of mortgages on other lands registered at *amphur* offices is not known, nor is it known to what extent the simple depositing of title deeds with the lender is practised.

Both Zimmerman and Andrews agreed that the indebtedness of the self-sufficing areas of the northeast, south, and half of the north, was of minor significance.<sup>28</sup> In round numbers there are about two million households in Siam, of which all but 8 to 9 per cent live in rural regions. The fact that the Siamese farmer has debts is not in itself dangerous. The very nature of farming, which concentrates financial needs and profits into two well marked periods of each year, makes debts almost a necessity. This periodicity of farming costs compels the contraction of short-term debts.



In a commercialized agricultural community it is not desirable for the farmer, even if he can afford it, to keep and spend his own savings from the harvest to the following planting season because he must forfeit interest on the money during the interval. There is, therefore, need for credit institutions that can supply both short-term loans and also long-term loans of larger sums that will enable the farmer to buy more land and improve his equipment and therefore his earning capacity. In the self-sufficing areas, on the other hands, the financial needs of the farmers are small and are met by loans from richer relatives and neighbors who have no better way of investing their surplus funds, even though interest is not often required. When there are ties of blood or friendship, the lender does not insist on a contract that is unfair to the borrower; and the borrower is reasonable about paying back—often in kind. Land values are low because land can be had for the clearing, and the farmer makes most of his own equipment. His money needs, aside from emergencies, are almost solely for farm animals, rice seed for the first season, and tax payments.

In commercialized areas—the center and part of the north—considerably more credit is needed. Since the reasons for borrowing are predominantly business and not social, most of the capital is supplied by comparative strangers who expect guarantees as well as the payment of both capital and interest in money. Thus any change in the price level affects the interest rates. Credit institutions in a commercialized country at first appear in the form of unregulated private moneylenders, operating from household to household and from village to village. Some prosperous local residents also lend money as a side issue to their regular business. A very confused, uneconomic state of affairs is one result; and widely varying interest rates are another. The second stage of credit institutions is represented by the cooperative societies of limited scope.

The chief credit problem of the country centers around Chiang-mai and the central plain, where Zimmerman found concentrated Tcs. 78,000,000 of what he called the country's harmful debt—because of the extortionate interest rates. Statistics show that in the north a higher proportion of the families who borrow money pay interest than in the center; yet the amount borrowed and the interest paid is higher in the commercialized regions. The center

is the most heavily indebted, averaging Tcs. 190 per family; in the north the average is Tcs. 30; in the south Tcs. 10; and in the north-east Tcs. 14.

Four years later, in 1935, Andrews found that indebtedness had increased in the center but had declined in the north and south. On the average the interest rate was 22 per cent. Yet even in the center the majority of lenders and borrowers alike were farmers, and nearly half of the outstanding debt was held within the family. If a farmer is on poor terms with his friends and relatives, he must borrow from a professional lender, who demands more security and higher interest rates.

The Andrews Survey showed that the rates charged by the profiteering moneylenders, especially the Chinese, had been much exaggerated. The Chinese rarely lend money but often advance commodities on credit or buy up the next crop in advance. When they do lend, it is in relatively large amounts; and business-like arrangements are essential. But interest is usually kept well within legal limits and is lower than that regularly exacted by professional Siamese lenders. The really dangerous indebtedness of the farmer is in the land rental paid chiefly to Siamese landlords in the highly irrigated commercialized areas, especially in the *klong* regions, where the proprietors are not themselves farmers.

In the years of good rice prices land rentals are not excessive, and the farmers have little trouble in paying them.<sup>20</sup> Since rents were fair at the time when they were established, the Bangkok landlord cannot be accused of profiteering although he has not scaled them down to meet depressed conditions. In 1934 and 1935 the Premier received numerous petitions from tenant farmers against the excessive rents they had to pay, and in some cases he was asked to eliminate the intermediary renting agents and to establish direct contact with the owners.

On the other hand, the creditors' position was hardly enviable. In the majority of cases they were not loan sharks but peasants only slightly less poor than their debtors. In its early legislation to protect the farmers from unscrupulous moneylenders, the Government seemed to be helping them at the expense of the majority of creditors, who were the debtor's friends and relatives and were not out to fleece him. Many farmers, taking advantage of the

situation, avoided paying interest even when it was possible for them to do so.

Debts were rarely cancelled by foreclosure. In good times creditors did not press for payment, and during the depression they preferred to wait for a rise in prices. A man who borrowed on his wife's jewelry simply lost it if he was unable to pay his debt, and this was the usual form of foreclosure. Andrews concluded that an energetic and reputable farmer could avoid danger by borrowing cash on paddy from his friends and thus obviate all claims on his crops. But the prevalence of debt shows how largely the lazy and spendthrift peasant predominates.

At different times the Government has tried to develop farmers' unions. The trouble always began when some influential man began to run the union for his personal profit. As soon as outside supervision ceased, even temporarily, accounts became neglected and got into a hopeless muddle. It seemed as if the unions would never improve until the impetus for such organization came from the farmers themselves. Until the depression such an impetus was wholly lacking.

Zimmerman's solution to the problem of the farmer's indebtedness was the extension of the cooperative movement in the commercialized areas. But he felt that it was pointless to introduce formal credit facilities in the self-sufficing areas, where it was neither greatly needed nor used and where interest rarely exceeded the legal limit of 15 per cent. The debts cared for by the cooperative societies during the depression represented about 2 per cent of the total farm indebtedness. While it was obviously unable in any substantial way to alleviate the situation at the time, the movement was to be primed for greater future usefulness. These societies have enabled the few farmers who belong to them either to rid themselves of enormous debts or else to substitute debts at lower interest. It has permitted others to buy land and avoid heavy rentals and has provided them with the equipment with which to increase their productivity. The gain has been solid and real, but it has not yet gone far enough.

Since these societies are as yet unable to raise their own capital from the farmers, their rate of expansion is controlled by the capital funds made available by the Government. Further expansion is

also curtailed by the lack of men sufficiently trained to supervise bookkeeping and educate the farmers in new techniques. The Government is anxious to eliminate foreign financial control, and the cooperative movement is the surest means of doing so. Zimmerman's estimate that the movement could assume the entire debt of the country in sixteen years seems a trifle optimistic.

Various criticisms of the cooperative movement have been made, ranging from charges of corruption to protests against the endless administrative red tape. In 1934, 5,000 farmers submitted a petition to the Government complaining that the cooperative movement had increased their enslavement to the middleman and asking the Government to replace the societies by directly assuming their debts and marketing their produce. This was but one of a stream of farmers' petitions for government aid during the years 1932-36. The lowest and neediest group, they claimed, were not being reached by the societies because they could not offer security; and the well-to-do farmers were taking advantage of their credit facilities to lend money to their poorer colleagues at rates only slightly lower than those of professional lenders.

The Government, however, did not consider that these criticisms invalidated the movement. Increasing funds have been placed at its disposal, and more careful supervision has been established with a view to seeing that the uses to which the funds are put serve their original purpose.

A committee named by the Ministry of Economic Affairs in 1934 to study the rural debt problem worked out a scheme to be grafted onto the original cooperative movement. It provided for the establishment of an agricultural bank to assume the farmers' debts and also to represent the Government; the issuance of bonds to creditors in exchange for mortgages on paddy lands; and the setting aside of a capital fund of Tcs. 3,000,000 for loans to farmers. The Department of Agriculture was to act as middleman for trade in seeds and animal products and to aid any potential buyers; and granaries or silos were to be erected in each cooperative station. The problem of debt settlement was to be placed in the hands of a committee representing debtors, government officials, and creditors. But the cooperatives were the main agency selected by the Government for the dual purpose of liquidating the farmers' debts and

teaching them by practical application the results of governmental agricultural research. Later, when the slate was wiped clean, these societies were to take over the work of buying, storing, and shipping rice. In 1937 the budgetary grant for the cooperative movement was double that of the preceding year. In 1938 there were 922 societies with a membership of over 11,000; 10 per cent of the societies were in the distributive trading class.

After toying with the idea of State-operated rice-mills and silos, the Government stated that it had no intention of entering the trade or of making profits therein. To begin with, it was hard to secure competent and trustworthy men outside of private enterprise. The Government temporarily backed a rice millers' corporation but eventually renounced the idea because too many mills refused to join in the scheme.<sup>30</sup> The majority of millers were bound by contracts with different firms in the matter of both prices and delivery. After it was realized that the millers thought of combining on their own, the Government decided to keep an eye on them, just as it had done on the labor situation. Any organization in the social scale, whether at the top or the bottom, was going to be government-controlled, if not government-initiated. More publicity was given the farmers about current prices, and the State tried its hand at price control. But the attempt to control the price of rice paid to the farmers was considered unsatisfactory. Before prices could be controlled, measures to assure the standard and quality of rice had to be enforced.

In 1937 the Government decreed that all persons engaged in the rice trade must be registered as a preliminary to directing whatever solution to the problem should be found. The lack of trained experts has impeded the Government at every step. It is not enough to exhort farmers to raise diversified crops; for Siam has had no soil survey and has no scientific farmers and no economists with knowledge of tariffs, freight rates, etc. Moreover, the nationalistic Assembly is always opposed to hiring expensive foreign experts. The few Siamese who have graduated from Agricultural Schools prefer to teach others rather than to practice agriculture themselves. It is no wonder that the Government had to postpone the attempt to supplant the middleman. Foreign exporting firms with long experience in the complicated rice business have been foiled when

they have tried to deal directly with the farmers. They have found that they have to buy from middlemen even in the rural districts because the farmers are already so indebted to them. Even when so simple a measure as standard weights and measures was introduced, it was found impossible to enforce it. Every time the Government has tried to solve the economic riddle in one particular way, it has been forced to tackle the problem as a whole.

In 1939 the Government embarked on a new step in its long foreshadowed policy of ousting the middleman and of taking a direct hand in agriculture, commerce, and industry. When the Thai Rice Company was organized, it was expressly said that the Government still had no intention of competing with private firms; profits would not be paid to its directors, among whom were high officials, but would be used for public works—the development of a new seaside resort, for example. This company is now operating eleven rice mills formerly in the hands of Chinese. Late in the year, when it became apparent that Siam's bumper rice crop was going to fetch a high price in the market created by a world at war, the Government stated that it was already buying paddy directly from the farmers both in order to help them and to maintain the price level; but that henceforth it would put capital principally into helping farmers to obtain a good variety of paddy seed. In January 1940 the Government also decided to establish the first of a series of paddy-buying stations in the Rangsit area. On April 1 the Government, which had heretofore rejected the proposal to fix rents, ordered a 20 per cent reduction in the rent of paddy fields cultivated by its nationals.

### *Rural Costs and Incomes*

The absence of bank accounts and the difficulty of appraising what and how much is raised for home consumption makes it hard to estimate accurately either the source or distribution of Siamese farming incomes. In the north and south the earnings from agriculture of the average household are more than twice as high as in the northeast, and in the center they are more than double those of the north and south.<sup>31</sup> For agriculture in the center is five times as productive per household as in the north or south, while trade is of far greater importance to the rural household of the south

than it is to the rural families in other areas. Whereas agriculture accounts for 60 per cent of the annual incomes in the center, in the other areas handicrafts are as important as agriculture; and in the south trade is equally important.

Cash income in the center is derived predominantly from rice sales, but elsewhere it comes chiefly from the sale of other crops. Animal products are the most important budgetary item in the northeast and south, but animal husbandry is so undeveloped that it figures very little in income anywhere. Fishing receives most attention in the regions where rice is least grown, but it brings in only small sums. Miscellaneous sources of income are made up of wages and rentals in the central plain, and of home industries and jungle products elsewhere. Handicrafts are carried on only in the seasons when the fields lie idle; and even in the regions where weaving and trading are most important, they are in the hands of Siamese women or Chinese men. Everything is subsidiary to rice culture.

When the depression came, it hit the central plain more than elsewhere because the people there were dependent on world rice prices for almost all their income and were caught by the fall of those prices before the crop was sold. The self-sufficing areas felt the slump much later. The drop in the farmers' income is shown by the statistics of the cooperative societies. In 1929-30 the average surplus of income over expenditures per member was Tcs. 92; in 1930-31 it was Tcs. 7; and it probably disappeared altogether during the next year.<sup>32</sup> From 1931-35 the gold that was so largely exported probably came from the hoardings of the farmers of the central plain, most of whom were forced to sell their savings in order to live. But by 1934 Andrews reported that on the average all areas throughout Siam, excepting the northeast, earned more than they spent. The rural Siamese tends to cut costs to meet diminished income; but in the northeast it was impossible to cut essential expenditures further, and conditions became serious.

Necessary costs in Siam consist of land and labor; the investment of capital by the cultivator is negligible. The labor's chief cost is his living expenses; and the chief cost of the land is determined by its valuation under pre-depression conditions, its interest-bearing debts, and its taxes. Some of these are fixed costs, whereas others

vary. The cash cost of living is the largest single item, and it could easily be reduced by half in the rice-growing sections. Fixed costs can be met only by increased production per unit, and experts believe that improved technique could yield from a half to a third more per *rai*.

Living expenses account for 52 to 69 per cent of all cash expenditures.<sup>33</sup> Nearly all the farmers produce a part of their living necessities at home. In the self-sufficing districts the fuel, most of the furniture and food, and nearly all the clothing are provided by home industries. This is also true, but to a smaller extent, of the commercialized districts. The chief items purchased in the center are fuel, light, and repairs on houses. The general use of kerosene and of electrical flashlights is increasing everywhere. Except for charcoal, little fuel is bought even by the wealthier families. Matches are used almost universally, and mosquito nets and screens are slowly becoming popular.

In all parts of Siam about one-tenth of the maintenance cost of the farm family is for clothing and another tenth for household supplies; and in all areas but the south, three-tenths is for food.<sup>34</sup> Owing to the nature of the climate and soil, the question of clothing and household expenditures is relatively unimportant. Depression prices forced the farmers to cut their household expenditures in half, especially in the northeast, where the Laos reverted almost to a subsistence economy. Though the depression inevitably involved a lowering of the standard of living, no one starved; the greatest danger lay in the regional loss of a varied diet. In the center more money is spent on medical drugs than in the other regions; about 99 per cent of the rural Siamese spend less than a tical a year for medical care.<sup>35</sup> Almost nowhere are appreciable sums spent on the purchase of alcohol.

Gifts to relations and friends are widespread among the rural Siamese and are not confined to a few wealthy households. A man can almost always borrow either food or money, without interest, to tide him over a bad spell. The Siamese, especially the Laos, are very charitable; and every household spends a few ticals in various forms of local charity without any thought of repayment. Probably all rural households give food to the priests at least once a week, and most households oftener. Gifts to the temple vary enor-



mously and depend wholly on the individual family's piety and means. Poorer people give food and services in the form of labor for water construction or repairs. Ecclesiastical costs account for more than half of the extraordinary expenditures all over Siam, and more money is spent on ceremonies than on either clothing or household supplies. The temples serve as schools, rest-houses, meeting places, and social and religious centers. The various ecclesiastical costs amount to about Tcs. 28 per family in the center, Tcs. 11 in the north, Tcs. 8 in the south, and Tcs. 5 in the northeast. Yet in all districts they maintain about the same proportion to all living expenses and therefore represent an approximately equal sacrifice.

As a result of poor technique and an inefficient economic organization, the cost of production on most Siamese farms has always been too high. Farming has probably never averaged more than a 2 per cent return on capital invested if anything at all is allowed to the owner-farmer as wages. Farm costs and household expenses increase with income, and the surplus of the wealthier farmer in the central plain is absorbed by the proportionately high taxes. With their higher cash income, these central farmers raise less of their food at home than do the farmers in the poorer regions. Zimmerman's statistics show that expenditure for agricultural costs generally approximates cash incomes.<sup>80</sup> This is true despite the fact that the country has such abundant resources that many of the capital goods, such as animal fodder and timber, which would otherwise have to be bought elsewhere, are available on the spot.

### *Cotton*

Ever since the Bowring Treaty put an end to the royal monopoly of the rice trade, rice-land has increased phenomenally; and the area formerly under sugar, tobacco, and cotton, has declined in proportion. Any region that can raise rice will do so; and competing crops, even though they may be better suited to the soil, will go to the wall.

The few stray cotton trees that have survived seem to be indigenous, the remnant of those that formerly supplied the people of the country with the cotton garments they have worn since time immemorial. The cloth woven by the Siamese from native cotton was of such poor quality that it was easily displaced by the softer,

colored cloth imported from abroad. The supply of cheap European, and later Japanese, cotton imports and the expansion of the rice export trade destroyed the cultivation of cotton except in a few places in the interior, such as the Korat Plateau and the forest clearings of the north. There the finishing process and weaving is still done by the women on their house looms, but the product is neither uniform nor of good quality. As soon as a Siamese can afford to buy even the crudest imports, he will relinquish the home product.

Early recognition of the evils of monoculture made the Department of Agriculture, on the eve of the first world war, try to improve the quality of Siamese cotton by importing machinery from abroad. Seed from Cambodia was distributed to increase the area under cotton to the extent of 6,000 *rai*, notably in Pitsanuloke. The Government announced that there was as sure a market for cotton as for rice, that the country was well suited to its cultivation, and that it would render the small farmer independent of the middleman, of whose existence the Siamese were just beginning to be conscious. Unfortunately, however, government initiative did not extend to buying up the crop it had thus encouraged. The war depressed the market to such an extent that its subsequent rise did not revive the dispirited farmer; and in the end the hated middleman was able to buy up the crop at very low prices.

The depression revived interest in cotton before the constitutional régime championed cotton cultivation as part of its program for diversified crops. It was hard to envisage over-production in a world that used 20,000,000 bales a year and in a country that annually imported cotton textiles to the value of Tcs. 20,000,000.

It was Japan's marked interest in Siam's cotton possibilities that stimulated the Government to turn its attention once more to cotton in 1934. The Government not only welcomed Japan's request to have a cotton survey made by her expert, Dr. Mihara, but engaged him for three years to supervise the application of the measures he envisaged. The Chao of Chiangmai and a few influential capitalists in the north asked the Minister of Agriculture how they could acquire a ginning machine and for suggestions as to the best seeds to use. The Government distributed 700 *piculs* (one *picul* was sufficient to plant 47 *rai*) of Cambodian seed to people

in different *changvads*. Enquiries for large supplies were received from both Germany and Japan, and the Government sent a member of the Department of Agriculture abroad to study American cotton.

In 1936 the Government allotted Tcs. 60,000 to the Department of Agriculture to purchase cotton from the farmers who had raised it, being assured that it could sell all to Japan. Rumors circulated that a state ginning factory would be set up by the end of the year at a cost of Tcs. 261,234, and that tenders for the machinery had already been accepted. The army actually erected an electrically operated spinning and weaving plant at Bangsue to supply the army with uniforms. Like so many nationalistic countries, Siam seemed to think that simply setting up machinery was going to assure economic salvation. It was expected that the Government would magnanimously take the lead, guarantee the market, and promote the industry without thought of profit.

Some of the propaganda employed was quite interesting. The educated Siamese were told that, whereas rice culture was classified as pauper's work, cotton was a gentleman's crop. Though necessary to feed the population, rice-growing involved weeks of wallowing in unhealthy mud fields, whereas cotton was a clean and easily harvested crop. Cotton cultivation would get rid of the evils of monoculture, and the money formerly sent out of the country for textile imports would remain in Siam.

For the farming class the Government issued posters showing huge money bags that would come into the possession of those who grew the cotton that the Government promised to buy. But in spite of all these exhortations the results around Lampang were deplorable; 27 acres produced only two hap baskets of cotton. The farmers sent to Bangkok for help. The expert who came out took photographs, but he had a hard time to induce the people to show him the worst crops. They became impatient at his interminable delays and demanded an immediate remedy. When he told them that at least eight preliminary steps were essential before they could even begin to cope with the insects that were ruining their crops, they became completely discouraged. Although cotton cultivation seemed to have been dropped from the official agenda, it was only in abeyance until more scientific data could be gathered.

The Japanese, impatient over waiting for the Siamese to grow cotton, have started their own industry on a small scale near Nakon Pathom. In July 1938 an area of 2,000 *rai* was planted in cotton, and 400 Siamese laborers were engaged. Machinery is to be used as far as possible, and it is reported that a total area of 30,000 *rai* has been earmarked for future cultivation. The history of cotton in Siam has been marred by bad luck, but neither the Government nor the Japanese are allowing themselves to be discouraged.

In spite of the report from Chiangmai that the effort of the Government to interest the people there in cotton growing had been more or less abandoned as a failure, the Government announced in the fall of 1939 that new military cotton workshops were to be set up at Bangsue and that Tcs. 11,000 had already been spent in buying Cambodian cotton seed and distributing it to cultivators. In October the Ministry of Agriculture received sanction to open an experimental cotton farm, equipped with a ginning factory, at the Saraburi school. In January 1940 Dr. Mihara, the Japanese expert, reported that there were 11,400,000 *rai* of land in Siam where cotton might well be grown as a second crop. Siamese conditions, in his opinion, are such as to make possible the raising of a grade of cotton not inferior to that of North America. Apparently it is still hoped that Japan will solve what has hitherto been the greatest stumbling block—the market problem.

### *Tobacco*

The Roberts Mission to Siam in 1838 was astonished to find the twelve-year-old daughter of the Governor of Paknam not only entirely unclothed but smoking a cigar "like a veteran in the vice."<sup>87</sup> They later became more accustomed to the sight since everyone smoked, even children not yet weaned. The king and court traditionally used tobacco from the Kanburi and Petchaburi districts, and this patronage increased both the quantity and quality grown there, until the region attained a virtual monopoly.<sup>88</sup>

Siam's tobacco output, even in its flourishing days, has never been enough for local consumption; and it is becoming steadily less so. It is grown to some extent in every province, but the main producers are in the mountain valleys of the north. Tobacco flour-

ishes in alluvial soil, chiefly on river banks and on the inundated lowlands; but it is not grown in the central plain, where the farmers prefer to buy it. On the Korat Plateau it is often grown in gardens but requires constant watering. Tobacco grown and cured in Siam is still smoked by the older men and children, but young adults prefer foreign tobacco to the sharp and acrid home-grown product. However, some Siamese tobacco is exported to Singapore and the south; and it is even the object of organized smuggling into Malaya.

The Siamese were able to develop the taste for foreign tobacco only in the prosperous years preceding the slump. In 1899 the value of the tobacco imported was Tcs. 5; in 1909, Tcs. 474; and in 1933, over Tcs. 7,000,000. Nowadays local production amounts to 9,000,000 lbs. and is a little more than twice the amount imported. Before the war the products of the British-American Tobacco Company and Chinese cigarettes began to invade the larger cities of Siam, and they are now driving the domestic article even out of the rural market. They have altered not only the Siamese taste for tobacco flavors but also the form of smoking. In 1907-8 the value of cigars imported was greater than that of cigarettes, and the value of manufactured tobacco higher than either. The bulk of these imports came from the United States.

Nowadays cigarettes have outdistanced the two other forms of tobacco, and 80 per cent of the imports come from the United Kingdom. The campaign against opium in China resulted in a universal, though transient, popularization of cigarettes, which the Chinese call "fragrant tobacco." The wave of militant patriotism in Shanghai led to the temporary prosperity of Chinese cigarette companies; but when it died down and foreign cigarettes reasserted their hold, the Chinese companies saved themselves from bankruptcy by selling abroad, notably to Siam, which has proved their best customer. In the three years prior to the depression their business doubled.

In the constitutional régime's program of economic nationalism as a means of offsetting the depression, tobacco naturally came in for important consideration, particularly as it is a winter plant and thus does not interfere with rice. The Government has long toyed with the idea of improving the quality of home-grown tobacco,

especially the relatively pest-free Mekong valley product, which is raised by the Lao farmers.

As early as 1926 a contract offered by an American was rejected because of its monopolistic features, but the Government let it be known that it would encourage any operations that confined themselves to developing Siamese tobacco for export. At the end of 1932 the British-American Tobacco Company took over the premises of the United Engineers at Banmai, with the idea of setting up a local cigarette factory under English management. In 1934 a Siamese official was sent to Java to study the tobacco industry there. As a result of these sporadic activities, the introduction of better quality stock was undertaken in different regions. The Assembly accepted in principle a draft bill to lower uniformly the tax on tobacco plantations, and a large-scale promotion of tobacco growing for the home market was envisaged.

The Government distributes Virginia tobacco seed to farmers who apply for it, and some of this has already been planted around Chiangmai under the Chao's special patronage. The British-American Tobacco Company has been prevailed upon to distribute seed, to supervise the crop, and to buy the produce when it is available. As the price is now about Tcs. 70 a picul, quite a few Laos have decided to cultivate it. The 1936 tariff, which was designed to protect home-grown tobacco, was more aspirational than realistic in its provisions.

The Tobacco Act of 1939, which was inspired by the same motives as the Liquid Fuel and Shipping Acts, was expected to bring in an additional Tcs. 10,000,000 in revenues. Since this Act made the future of independent tobacco manufacturers in Siam very uncertain, the British-American Tobacco Company suspended work on its new factory; and a Chinese concern also ceased operations. Later a Bill was passed reducing the stamp duty on tobacco grown in Siam, although up to that time, despite the new Act, no control over growing or curing tobacco had been enforced. In August 1939 a new company was registered, the Haw Huang Tobacco Company, with a capital of Tcs. 200,000; and two months later the Government acquired the business and plant of the Burapa Company. The sale price of imported tobacco has been raised by a minimum of 15 per cent since the outbreak of war in September 1939,

and local growers and manufacturers have also been permitted to raise their prices.

### *Pepper and Spices*

For centuries pepper was cultivated chiefly in the humid peninsula around Chandaburi and Puket, but in recent years it has been displaced in this area by rubber. Production was formerly carried out by the Khmers and later by the Thais, but now it is almost wholly in Chinese hands. At one time it made up a part of the gifts sent to foreign countries by the Siamese kings, and in the seventeenth century the pepper monopoly was one of the chief bones of contention among the foreign merchants at Ayuthia. It was allotted to the French by Phaulkon shortly before his fall from power, probably in a final effort to bolster his position. At that time the pepper output was about 3,000 tons a year, and ever since that time it has been subject to swift reversals of fortune.

In 1922 complaints were made to the Ministry of Agriculture that the pepper-planters in Chandaburi could no longer produce pepper at remunerative prices and that the industry was dying out. This was productive, at least, of an official inquiry.<sup>89</sup> It was learned that from 1915 to 1921 the quality of Chandaburi pepper had been in no way inferior to the Netherlands Indies brand, but that the cost of production was at least twice as great in Siam owing to the method of its cultivation. This was true in spite of the fact that labor and materials cost approximately the same in both countries.

Pepper-growing is expensive because of the constant need for watering and weeding, and even then dependence on the weather makes the yield uncertain. The plant ripens on poles and bears fruit when three years old, but the best pepper comes only after the sixth year; it may then be harvested for the next ten years. The unripe berries give a black pepper, and it is in this form that Siamese pepper is exported to Singapore, the world's pepper mart. White pepper, obtained after the fruit has ripened and the black shell is removed, has nearly double the value of the black. Though Siamese technique has been developed through long experience, the return per acre in Siam could be greatly increased by scientific selection and preparation of the soil and by intensive care.

The very high prices that pepper brought during the first war fell in 1920 to a point at which the sale price was only slightly above the cost of production; and the farmers who hired labor sustained a real loss. Cooperative credit is not the remedy for the present plight of pepper; cooperative marketing can lower the cost of production, but nothing can raise the fluctuating and low prices it is fetching. The average price of black pepper has ranged between Tcs. 5 and Tcs. 70 per pound during the past forty-five years. The majority of pepper growers can afford to raise it only because it is a subsidiary occupation to rice cultivation.

From the marketing angle the middleman, as in the rice trade, has not been without sin. The practice of soaking peppers in water to give them added weight has not only ruined the reputation of Chandaburi peppers but has caused them to spoil more rapidly. To prevent the adulteration of pepper exports, the Assembly passed a Bill providing for official tests for exportation.<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately this Act controls only the admixture of pepper with foreign substances and has done nothing to improve the quality. This is important since during the past ten years a root fungus has begun to spread ruin throughout entire plantations. Local farmers are unable to cope with this blight, and the pleas of Zimmerman and Andrews to call in foreign experts have been unavailing. In 1935-36 only 73 piculs of pepper, valued at £190, were exported, as compared with the preceding year's record of 14,413 piculs, valued at £46,500. Much of the land formerly planted in pepper has now reverted to jungle, and once prosperous villages have been reduced to a few shacks. The Chandaburi area is especially pathetic; as more fruit is already grown in that region than can be profitably exported, there is no possible alternative crop to pepper.

In addition to pepper, cardamoms and ginger are the only tropical spices grown in Siam. Cardamoms flourish in the forests of southeastern Siam and on the Korat Plateau. In the latter area they grow wild, but around Chandaburi they are planted. This spice is exported to Hong Kong. Ginger is planted for domestic consumption only; it is added to foods or put between *miang* tea leaves, and in candy form it is especially popular among the Chinese. Spanish peppers, or chillies, are planted in almost every garden and together with betel nuts make an indispensable condiment for native dishes.



*Vegetables, Fruits, and Miscellaneous Crops*

Peas, beans, cabbages, onions, and garlic are grown to a certain extent for home consumption, especially in the northeast of Siam. Their cultivation could be extended for the Bangkok market, but income from these crops is dependent on the development of rapid and cheap means of transportation. The Government's policy of encouraging secondary crops, and especially its road building program, should greatly increase the area planted and help counteract the evils of monoculture.

The traditional cereal crops of western Asia—wheat, millet, and barley—are absent from Siam, despite favorable weather conditions throughout the country. Corn is cultivated in small amounts, mostly on the dry Korat Plateau, with a total yield of about 7,150 tons; it is one of the most important of the secondary crops and is eaten roasted or boiled. It is unlikely, however, that it will develop any commercial value since it is planted only in small fields and the yield per *rai* is very low.<sup>41</sup>

Manioc, or tapioca, was introduced comparatively recently as a food plant by Chinese immigrants in the peninsula and around Bangkok. The building of the railroads favored its cultivation in the peninsula, where the Chinese coolies used it as fodder for their pigs.

Trees bearing both tropical and sub-tropical fruit are to be found in nearly every village. Next to Manila, Bangkok offers probably the finest array of fruit in the world. Most notable are the many species of banana planted in the Mekong valley, the Menam plain, and the peninsula, which are sent to Bangkok by rail. Their leaves are used for wrapping parcels and as cigarette paper, and their stem can serve as pig fodder—all in addition to their main food value. The Government is encouraging the cultivation for export of bananas, bread fruit, durians, papayas, and pomelos. As yet, however, insufficient preliminary work has been done in regard to transport and market research. Fruit is now exported to the value of about Tcs. 650,000 annually.

Coffee and tea are almost entirely uncultivated in spite of favorable climatic conditions. Successful attempts at coffee growing have been made by Europeans and later by the Chinese; but so far there is little demand for coffee except in the urban centres.

Tea is far more important because it is an indigenous crop. It is grown by the Laos and some mountain tribes, but not for drinking purposes. They mix it with a fish paste and ginger curry and serve it with rice. Tea-trees, called *va-mieng*, grow wild in the regions between the Meping and the Melao Rivers. Even when they are cultivated by the Tins and the Khamus, the ground is simply cleared away from around the foot of the trees to get the leaves, which, after they ferment, are sold for ridiculously cheap prices as *miang*. The use of these fermented leaves in ceremonial functions by all the Thais probably dates back to very early times. There is even some linguistic indication that the Chinese first obtained the tea plant from the Thai people. In some districts in northern Siam it is universally chewed, mixed with salt, and has such a stimulating effect that it enables men to continue working even without food.<sup>42</sup> The internal trade in *miang* is very large in northern Siam and is increasing. There is some export to Burma and a little to Bangkok, and the price varies widely according to season and locality. The demand for *miang* as such is very limited and hardly capable of extensive commercialization, but there is no reason why good tea could not be produced in almost unlimited quantities.

Kapok is a fibre derived from a tree grown all over Siam, mostly in rice fields. These trees were recently planted in western Siam in great numbers, and their fibre used as fodder, fertilizer, and oil. Known and used for centuries, kapok is supposed to have served as filling for cushions in the time of Alexander the Great.<sup>43</sup> La Loubère's is the first record of its existence in Siam, and only in modern days has it become an exportable commodity. Discoveries of more uses for it in the form of lifebuoys, surgical dressings, chemical apparatus, felt hats, and cloth, in addition to its time-honored use in upholstery, have created a growing demand for kapok.

Before it can be commercialized, kapok will have to be grown intensively and handled in bulk. The kapok tree is not difficult to grow as it flourishes in a wide range of soils. Only since the war has there been any attempt in Siam to produce it on a commercial scale; but instead of seriously improving her own production, Siam has increased her imports of floss from Java and Singapore. The companies most likely to experiment with kapok have been handi-

capped by inadequate finances and by the usual dearth of reliable cheap labor. The enterprise needs capital, a good site, seed selection, and easy communication with a shipping port. A large plantation is not essential; kapok could be grown in small areas if the packing and cleaning were done at a central station.

Jute seems to have become virtually a monopoly of the Ganges Delta. Feeble efforts to grow this plant have been made in Siam since it is so much in demand for rice sacks. Jute is now imported in large quantities; but prospects of growing it locally are poor since jute cultivation, which needs plentiful and skilled labor, only pays in densely populated countries.

Gutta Percha is the name applied to the product of a large variety of plants, which includes trees of the same genus as those supplying white gutta.<sup>44</sup> There are no plantations of white gutta in Siam, but latex is gathered from uncultivated trees. No one has seriously considered commercializing it since the cost of starting such a plantation is about the same as in the case of rubber and the product is much less valued in world markets. Improved methods of tapping, on the Javanese model, could be introduced for such trees as are already being worked.

On the whole, the present importance of minor crops is very small. Rice is still far and away the most important, accounting for 93 per cent of the total agricultural production. Its nearest rival, rubber, makes up only 3.8 per cent, and coconuts 1.8 per cent. The rest are too insignificant to be honored with official percentages; their significance lies wholly in the realm of potentialities.

### *Sticklac*

The conditions of soil, climate, and altitude are very similar throughout eastern Siam; and trees suitable for lac cultivation are found throughout this region. In some provinces no lac is produced at all, and in others it is an important industry. Transportation facilities apparently bear no relation to lac production since a great deal is produced in remote areas. Nor does it depend on the location of the industries allied to it, such as silk and cotton dyeing, which are carried on in regions to which the lac must be imported.

The Florentine traveler, Giovanni di Nicola, found the lac industry already well established; lac from the north was collected

at Tenasserim and Ayuthia.<sup>45</sup> Nowadays the two main lac areas are in the southeast and northwest; the kind of tree used, as well as the methods of propagation and collection, differ from one region to the other. It is strange that the three most important lac-producing trees in India, although found in Siam, are not used there for that purpose.

The larvae emerging from the eggs of insects that frequent at least thirty species of trees settle down on a twig to suck its juice.<sup>46</sup> While thus engaged, they encase themselves in an incrustation, a little more than an inch thick; this is the lac, which contains both a dye and resin. From time immemorial the native peoples have used lac dye as a substitute for cochineal. After the discovery of aniline, lac dye lost its commercial value; and resin came to the fore as an article of international trade, especially in the making of gramophone records, varnishes, sealing wax, and insulating material.

Locally, lac is still used for dyeing. To get this red dye, the lac must be removed from the trees before the young insects that give the coloring matter emerge. These insects must also be killed inside the crust, which is done by exposing the lac to the sun. Foreign manufacturers regard the coloring matter as a nuisance since it has to be removed by methods costing time and money; this could easily be done at an earlier stage in the process.

In Siam lac cultivation is nothing like as extensive as in India and French Indo-China. The original sticklac trees that made Siam's reputation for fine quality lac were abandoned in favor of faster growing shrubs. It takes 10,000 trees to yield about a ton; at their best, trees give twice that amount, but only ten or fifteen years after planting. Only at one place in Siam, near Lampang, has lac cultivation achieved commercial proportions; and even there it has suffered from the methods employed by Chinese middlemen, who mix it with spurious substances to increase its weight. The best lac for lacquer is the most solvent; and the Chinese, by holding it over for a better price, add to the harm done by the detrimental Siamese drying methods and make the lac even less utilizable. Carelessness in cutting the twigs has also hurt the quality by adding dust and shavings.

The majority of lac cultivators are Siamese farmers, for whom lac is a secondary occupation involving from five to thirty trees.

Another category of lac grower is the small merchant who rents from 40 to 150 trees. He leaves the care of these trees to the farmer who owns the land, giving him half the yield in compensation. The professional lac cultivators rent from 50 to 450 trees from the rice farmers and employ hired labor.

Between 1911 and 1926 the quantity of lac produced was almost doubled, and it was realized that it would be more advantageous to grow it on a regular plantation. At this time the trees used grew wild and were scattered about at irregular intervals, shaded by other trees and damaged by ants and wild animals. Furthermore, it was easy to steal the resin during the collecting season. If a fall in the price of lac had not antedated the depression and continued unchecked ever since, some improvement in production and marketing might have been affected. The price has gradually declined until it is now only Tcs. 6-7 per picul.<sup>47</sup> Large stocks have accumulated in Bangkok and the provinces, and purchasers now buy from Siam's neighbors, where the quality is better and the freight-age cheaper. The Indian crop is much larger; and the demand from the United States, the chief market, has declined because of the discovery of cheap substitutes for lac. Apart from all the mistakes that can be, and are, made by the cultivator and middleman, the crop is too dependent on weather conditions to be reliable. Unfortunately, since lac requires the same climatic conditions as rice, the farmer cannot depend on it as an alternative crop.

### *Coconuts and Oil-Seeds*

Of all the palms in Siam that grow in large numbers, the coconut is the only one that is confined to one area.<sup>48</sup> Formerly coconut palms flourished all over the peninsula, in central Siam, and on the Korat Plateau; but as a result of the ravages of the black beetle and the red weevil, they now grow only in western Siam and the peninsula. The island of Ka Samui, off the east coast, is still famous for the quality of its coconuts. Even in the regions where they flourish most, coconuts can hardly be called a means of livelihood. The vast majority of many millions of trees are not to be found in regular plantations but in clumps around houses or in semi-cleared jungles near southern villages. There are probably about 6,000,000 such trees in Siam, of which slightly more than half are in bearing.

The average tree yields forty-five nuts annually and comes into bearing between the fourth and seventh year after planting. Some continue to bear to the age of sixty, or even a hundred, years.

A few Siamese capitalists have invested in plantations like those of the Raja of Jering and the late Phya Wichna of Singora, and some Europeans have enterprises at Chandaburi and Naratiwad. The scope of these industries is quite limited. In 1913 the Bhukit Tengah Coconut Company, with a capital of £30,000, bought an estate of 1,500 acres in the peninsula. During the war five Bangkok Companies, with an aggregate capital of £158,000 invested chiefly in British Malaya, had scattered plantations at Chantabun, Trang, and Bandon. Foreigners backed these ventures, and Siamese capital showed itself cautious about coconut investments. Pre-war foreign investors, however, were as keen on speculation in coconuts as an earlier generation had been on gold.

Shortly after the waning of the great rubber boom about 1912, it was confidently asserted that the next tropical product to excite speculation would be the coconut.<sup>60</sup> World consumption of copra—the dried meat of the coconut—had risen in fifteen years from 100,000 to 600,000 tons annually. The world war brought the discovery of new uses for the coconut, and in the general demand for fatty substances of all kinds its price tripled in two years. This was maintained until prices fell away in the general trade slump of 1921-22. Subsequently the price has ranged from three to five ticals per hundred fresh nuts.

The world copra market has been subject to a series of combines.<sup>60</sup> But the coconut industry in Siam is so little developed that it has scarcely been affected thereby. On the whole, cultivation is primitive and almost wholly for family consumption; its commercial possibilities are unrealized in spite of its being one of the easiest forms of agriculture. The owner has only to pick nuts and shoot squirrels, and he can even train a monkey to perform the first task.<sup>61</sup> Unripe nuts are opened for milk, and the white meat is given to children as titbits; many of the ripe nuts are pressed wastefully for oil. The hard shell is used as a receptacle, especially for carrying water; and the leaves can serve as roofing. A few nuts are occasionally bartered for salt and other necessities. Only when the owner of a few trees finds himself with a stock of nuts beyond

the needs of his household does he exert himself to make a little copra, which the nearest Chinese trader will buy for considerably less than its real value.

Copra is made by the simple process of splitting the nut and drying the halves of the kernel in the sun. But by transforming its coconuts into copra, a country fails to get full value out of them; for almost every part of a coconut has valuable by-products. The fibre can be made into mats, brushes, and rope; the shell can be used as fertilizer; and the kernel for oil and as fodder for fattening livestock. Since profits from the fibre and shell are small, machinery should be set up locally. Suitable sites and seed could be selected with government aid.

The present copra export, valued at Tcs. 400,000, proves that at present coconut-growing in Siam is the product of ignorance and inertia. Even if no more trees are planted, the present growth could be turned into a far more valuable export. But the southern population is sparse, with no acute wants or desire for wealth; and there are always transportation difficulties, which the southern railway has not yet resolved sufficiently to galvanize local energies. Nor has the Government done anything to protect coconuts from the pests that periodically denude whole districts. At the repeated request of the rural authorities a mild regulation for the protection of trees was passed in 1920, but it was never enforced. The center of the copra trade, such as it is, is in Penang for the peninsula and in Bangkok for the rest of the country.

The palmyra palm is scattered singly over the rice fields of middle and western Siam, but it is not nearly so important as in India or Ceylon. Sap is collected in earthen vessels manufactured by the Government and sold for a high price, plus a tax. The use of any other container is a legal misdemeanor.

The areca palm, which bears the betel nut, is cultivated all over the country; but the production of nuts does not equal the demand, and about 2,000 tons are imported annually from the Netherlands Indies. Production could be easily increased, but up to now the idea has not appealed to European enterprise. Once planted, the areca palm grows like the coconut palm, naturally and without care. In the south the dried nuts are exported to an ever-ready

market in China and India. The betel nut contains tannic acid and a dye, but its major use is as a substitute for a chewing-gum. Lime counteracts its acid taste and intensifies its red color, and tobacco adds to its savor.

Oil-seeds generally have little importance in Siam. The food of all tropical peoples is poor in fats, and almost the only oil the Siamese have comes from pressing sesamum seed. This seed is used in cooking; and the residue is rich in nitrogen, which can be used either as fodder or fertilizer. An additional advantage is that sesamum can be grown on rice fields when they lie fallow. But profits from its export to China, where it is used for making sweets, are not sufficient to induce the lethargic Siamese peasant to increase its cultivation. Sesamum is grown in middle Siam, where it supplies oil in regions where coconuts do not grow. Ten per cent of the small crop of under 20,000 acres is exported.

Peanuts are consumed even less than sesamum, in spite of conditions favorable to their growth in most parts of the country and a ready market in China. At present they have no economic significance, but they have a certain dietary importance for some of the rural populace.<sup>52</sup>

In the period following the world war the increasing number of oil mills being erected in Siam and the haphazard method in which these mills were generally operated led the Minister of Commerce to ask for a report on them.<sup>53</sup> From this report it was learned that the peanut, sesamum seed, cotton seed, castor bean, and soya bean are all grown in Siam as a garden, and occasionally as a field, crop. Generally speaking, vegetable oils in Siam are produced by the most primitive methods. Because there is no local demand for a good grade of edible oil, all vegetable oils are pressed without regard to refining methods and have a rather disagreeable taste and smell.

The soya bean yields the only vegetable oil that the present Government is developing. As in the case of the coconut, the infinitely useful soya bean has been curiously neglected in Siam. For years Siam imported about a million ticals' worth of soya beans from Manchuria; but when the price there rose suddenly from Tcs. 2.50 to Tcs. 6 per picul in 1937, the Government launched a



project for an intensive cultivation of the soya bean at home. Apart from its food value, the soya bean is used in the manufacture of soap, celluloid, explosives, and paints.

A committee charged with propagating the soya bean took over 70,000 *rai* of the most suitable land in the north. This area was planted with soya beans, whose future sale value was estimated at between Tcs. 200,000 and Tcs. 300,000.<sup>54</sup> During the last two years efforts have been made to persuade Siamese farmers to cultivate the soya bean extensively as an off-season crop.

In 1938-39 there were 23,000 acres under soya bean cultivation, and the yield increased 66 per cent over the previous year. In 1939 Phra Sarasasna, former Minister of Agriculture, started an experimental soya bean farm at Hua Min; and in January 1940 the Government announced its intention of erecting a factory to manufacture soya beans in powdered form to make a beverage like coffee. It is hoped to achieve an annual production of 35,600,000 lbs., sufficient for domestic consumption and an export surplus. The fall in copra prices in the fall of 1939 was attributed to soya bean competition.

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## XIII · COMMERCE

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### *Internal Trade*

The Chinese, through control of the distribution of imports, dominate Siam's internal market; but two other groups also have some share in internal trade. Indians, either Sikhs from the Punjab or Muslims from Bombay and south India, are shopkeepers who deal principally in jewelry, piece goods, and "sundries"; although not a numerous group, they fill in a gap left by the Chinese. Siamese women are the third local group handling internal trade.

Some of the markets that used to meet from once to three times a week have now become permanent. Slightly above this in the economic scale is the *amphur* seat, which functions both as a large market and as administrative headquarters. The *changwad* market is also near the government center, and formerly the *monthon*—now abolished—had its own market too.<sup>1</sup> The conservative farmer confines his trading to deals with the rice broker; but at least half of the Siamese country women go every morning to the nearest market, trading in their surplus domestic products for a little cash and for products that the household cannot or does not raise. But they do not trade throughout the whole day, and they usually do not keep shop.

Perhaps this is because they appreciate the futility of competing with the Chinese rural shopkeepers. The Chinese run butcher and cook shops, the hardware and tailoring businesses, and general stores. In some cases the Siamese, and frequently the Laos, who show more business aptitude, have recently opened country stores; and a very few of them have learned enough to hold their own against Chinese competition.

Trade is most developed in the provinces that have the most complete communications. In the center, where most of the trading is done, it is in Chinese hands. In the north and south, which have better communications than the northeast, the average rural house-

hold derives from a fifth to a fourth of its yearly income from trade profits. Andrews concluded that improved trade is of great advantage to Siamese farmers since it permits them to buy more and better supplies at lower prices and gives them a better sale for their produce. The whole matter is bound up with larger problems: improvement of the farmers' status, under-population, under-development of the credit and marketing systems, and the lack of applied technical knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Zimmerman's program called for at least a doubling of the population, a doubling of the yield per *rai*, a tripling of the national cash income, a diversified agriculture, a doubling of the standard of living, a strong internal credit and marketing system, and a diversified series of export staples. He advocated that the area under wet rice should be increased by a third, the whole cultivated area tripled, and taxation doubled. The result would be a tripling of the country's revenues. Siam, Zimmerman felt, had more possibilities than Java, which had done better than Siam in the same forty-year period.

Andrews emphasized inland trade as the most important factor in the life of rural Siamese communities.<sup>3</sup> The central problem was the attainment of a better, less fluctuating financial status. Although he subscribed to what Zimmerman had advocated, Andrews emphasized the need for improved communications, which would eliminate the middleman by enabling Bangkok to trade directly with her markets. Yet, in his opinion, better communications were not the whole answer to the problem; in the peninsula good highways had not meant trade expansion. Another factor was essential—the increased demand and supply of local goods, along with the demand for non-local goods, which must grow up side by side.

### *The Siamese in Business*

The history of their external commerce is not creditable to the Siamese; they have always left it in the hands of foreigners and have never offered the slightest competition. When the early kings monopolized imports, they handed them over to foreigners to dispose of; thus the first extraterritoriality privileges were virtually a gift to the Dutch. Siam could sail none of her own ships to foreign ports and was dependent on foreign crews and officers. In 1680 she

introduced the custom of turning over important politico-commercial posts to foreigners. Only recently have the Siamese interested themselves in commerce, formerly the only question was which of the foreigners in Siam would control her trade and industry.

Although many Siamese feel that the rural population is well enough off in its present primitive and self-sufficient state, they nevertheless want their Government to enjoy the revenues essential to upholding their country's prestige among the nations of the world; and this can only be achieved by expanding agricultural commerce.<sup>4</sup> As yet, however, there is little realization on the part of patriotic Siamese of the sacrifices and energy that must go into commercializing their nation. Before the depression there was even less appreciation of this. The younger generation was sure that everything would be rosy and splendid. Although they resented seeing their country being developed by foreigners, they overlooked the intermediary stages between dispensing with outside aid and themselves participating in that development to a larger degree.

The Siamese have not yet learned business methods. They find it hard to make an estimate on any piece of work, as to its cost in time or money, and are also careless in its execution. They lack the Chinese urge to make money; they insist on a higher standard of living, but they regard a job as a status in life and not as an opportunity for advancement. Caught between Chinese industry and stamina and the technical knowledge and capital of Occidentals, the Siamese until now have lacked the desire and perseverance to carve out a commercial slice for themselves.

In pre-revolutionary days the Siamese failed in several large-scale experiments in the shipping and coal mining industries. An attempt to raise sugar on a marketable scale at Nakon Jaisri failed in the 1880's, and a similar attempt to commercialize cotton-weaving bankrupted its promoters. Engineering seemed to offer a more congenial field for Siamese efforts, as is shown by their successful railroad history. They have shown a marked tendency to enter journalism, but their weakness for indulging in irresponsible and scurrilous attacks on the Government, foreign nations and on individuals shows that vituperation still comes to them more naturally than constructive ideas. Study of the law greatly attracts the

Siamese mind, but this profession is already overcrowded. The drudgery and manual side of medicine militates against that profession, which in many other ways appeals to the Siamese. There are a certain number of Siamese retail firms now in existence—clothiers, hatters, general stores, and above all beauty parlors—but they are very few in number and are usually on a small scale.

In the past few years more Siamese have been entering business on a large scale. Phya Devahastin is representative of the few outstanding Siamese who have put money into different enterprises. In September 1938 a Siamese Insurance Company was registered with a capital of Tcs. 1,000,000; and earlier in the same year the Thai Nua Banich Company,<sup>5</sup> with a capital of Tcs. 3,000,000, was formed to work tin and timber. Protected by government legislation, Siamese shipping companies have also been created; but they are all in the embryonic stage. Registered Siamese ships must employ Siamese nationals to the extent of three-fourths of their crew.

### *Overland Trade*

Overland trade consists chiefly of caravans to the north and west; cart and boat traffic to the east; and railroad, road, and boat exchange in the peninsula to and from Malaya.

The chief feature of northern Siam's commerce in recent years has been the gradual decline of the trans-frontier trade with Burma.<sup>6</sup> Most of what was formerly sent there now goes either north or south by railroad. In the past the principal exports were teak, livestock, and dyed silk textiles; the main imports were European goods brought through Burma for sale in northern Siam. This trade was carried on by Chiangmai merchants, groups of ambulatory Shan and Burmese peddlers, and even by a few Chinese caravans. When the rupee reigned as the currency of northern Siam, there was a big trade in bullion, which the railroad and the establishment of Siamese currency have subsequently checked.

Formerly the registration of the land trade with Burma was carried out by clerks posted on the main trans-frontier roads. But the returns were far from accurate, and it was impossible to supervise the work of clerks done at such distant posts. After 1926 this trade was registered at the centers through which the bulk of

commodities passed—Bhamo, Lashio, Heho, Shwenyaung in the Shan States, and Thingannyinaung in the south. The long contemplated Siamo-Burmese Railroad has not yet materialized to alter the situation; but the northern express, in spite of its high freight rates, changed the whole system of northern commerce. In general, Siam can now be supplied more cheaply and quickly from Bangkok than from Rangoon.

On the other hand, trade with the southern Shan States has increased greatly since the war. A constant stream of bullock and pony caravans wends its way down from Kentung and Kunming. The wares they bring to Siam are sheepskins, opium, raw silk, bells, and beeswax. Commerce and communications have brought new immigrants to the north, where there are still enormous tracts of land waiting to be developed near the Yunnan frontier. The same may be said of the northeast. Around Nan the teak forests positively demand scientific exploitation. Some commercialized rice areas and the salt wells around Korat furnish staples of trade, which the Laos' business capacity has organized well, considering the primitive means of locomotion at their disposal.

After forty years, the régime of free trade enjoyed by the French Laos came to an end in 1932, when customs barriers were established along the Mekong frontier. Under the old system the merchandise sent across from Siam did not seriously compete with French trade in Laos, which was itself limited by the irregular river transportation. However, Siam's railroad policy made Laos a commercial frontier of Indo-China. In 1928 the revision of Indo-China's tariff put an end to the liberal import of merchandise into Laos. In the four years between the establishment of the new tariff and of the Mekong customs barrier, smuggling was brisk and difficult to suppress along the Siamo-Laotian frontier.

For the many years that roads and banks were lacking, Laos naturally found its sole trade outlet through Siam. In 1931 more than 80 per cent of French Laos' trade was with Siam, and the opening of the Ubol-Paksé road further strengthened the Siamese hold.

Before the Siamese raised their tariff twice during the depression years, the invasion of Laos by foreign goods had been due to a difference, ranging from 5 to 20 per cent, in the duties paid

in Bangkok and Saigon. Moreover, French manufacturers have never catered to the desires of an Asiatic clientele. The Mekong furnished an easy highway between Laos and Siam and was an impossible frontier to guard; and customs barriers between Siam and Laos were also kept down through fear that Chinese merchants and many of the natives would leave Laos for Siam in the event of a high tariff being established there. This fear seemed justified by the rapid growth of the Siamese town opposite Vientiane. Cucherousset was the chief advocate of making Laos a free zone by pushing back the customs frontier to the Annamite Range, where it could be more effectively established. The only local organization of Laos, the Mixed Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, supported this idea. Siam, it was pointed out, had never objected to the export of her teak through Saigon; and she bought annually from her eastern neighbor 17,267 tons of fish and a great deal of raw silk. Products of the two countries were in general too similar to create much of a shuttle trade.

Fortunately the outcry from Laos resulted in the establishment of only one post at Aranya Prades, and the statistics furnished there naturally give no accurate picture of the trade going on between the two countries. Moreover, Laos was simultaneously endowed with some very useful roads along the Mekong and with others connecting the colony with Annam and Tonkin. The new Siamese duties, too, made the disparity between the products imported from Bangkok and from Saigon slightly less glaring. If the tariff policy were literally carried out, it would hurt the development of Laos beyond repair. There could be no doubt, however, that Indo-China, like Siam, was pursuing as fast as she could a policy of economic self-sufficiency—but within the larger confines of the French empire. In 1939 the Siamese set up customs stations along the Mekong.

Peninsular Siam belongs to that region of the Orient for which Singapore and, to a lesser extent, Penang, are the chief entrepôts. As regards rice, Singapore and Malaya constitute less of an entrepot than a port of ultimate destination. Malaya retains for her own consumption about three-fourths of the rice she receives from abroad, and the amount specifically from Siam is valued at about \$26,000,000 (Straits). The great decline in Siam's animal exports

to Malaya between 1934 and 1936 was the big price that she had to pay for allowing her livestock to be decimated by disease. Singapore still consumes vast quantities of Bangkok's duck eggs, of which about 39,000,000 are imported annually. In Penang also Siamese poultry is growing in favor; but the pig, sheep, and goat trade there has shown a marked decline.

In 1932 a Siamese Trade Commissioner came to Malaya to develop commercial relations between the two countries. Siam wanted to increase her exports there, other than rice, but found that to do this she must buy more from Malaya. One of the chief obstacles to commercial relations between Malaya and Siam has been the role played by Siam in the tin and rubber restriction agreements. Smuggling over the peninsular frontier threatens to nullify the sacrifices involved in the restriction system. At present Penang is still the market for Siam's ore and raw rubber, as well as the center for its smelting and milling; and these two industries are largely financed by Penang banks. Siam's recent attempt to divert these exports to the port of Bangkok by railroad rate manipulation has caused intense resentment in the Malayan press. Competition and the absence of a natural frontier make the relations between Siam and Malaya nothing like so amicable as between Siam and Burma.

### *History of Foreign Trade*

In spite of recent attempts at industrialization, Siam remains commercially the same as it has been for the last hundred years—an exporter of raw materials and an importer of manufactured goods. The country has great natural resources, which are still quite undeveloped owing to the shortage of capital, population, technical skill, communications, and the will to exploit them.

It was the peninsula that first attracted foreign merchants. Indian ships called regularly at Puket, where they traded in tin, gold, and spices; and Chinese junks served the ports of the eastern coast. Overland routes connected these different ports of call with Ayuthia. In the sixteenth century Pattani became the chief peninsular mart. The Portuguese, who established themselves there in 1517, were followed almost a century later by the Dutch.

An English captain, William Keeling, visiting Bantam in 1608,



met there an envoy of the king of Siam, from whom he learned that that country offered abundant cloth, gold, and precious stones for commerce. This the captain reported to the East India Company, as well as the envoy's assurances that Siam would be happy to trade with the king of England. Accordingly, two years later, English merchants on the *Globe* touched at Pattani, where they were welcomed by the natives but not by the Dutch, who kept them from turning their prow towards Singora. They proceeded on to Ayuthia, where the Dutch had a post for the hides traffic, in addition to their peninsular depots for the tin trade.

The accession of King Songtam in 1611 brought a marked development in free intercourse with foreign powers. Trade was placed under the Phraklang, or Minister of Finance, who had godowns attached to the Treasury where he kept taxes collected in kind. When enough materials had been amassed, they were put aboard royal junks with other merchandise and sent abroad for sale. In this way the king's profits were pooled with the State's income. Although both were regarded as the king's personal property, this at least served to make direct taxation less onerous.

The king also had the choice of buying imports before any others. These he stored away and eventually disposed of to the public through retail merchants. Siam's envoys to foreign countries were merchants as well as diplomats, and they were punished on their return if their business turned out unprofitably. All junk trade was handicapped by losses through piracy, delays on account of bad weather, or the time lost in loading; for none of these risks was there any organized insurance.

Both the English and the Dutch, when they came to Ayuthia, intruded on the Japanese and Indian trades. The Japanese eliminated themselves through their turbulence, and this increased the hold of the Chinese over the eastern commerce. The development of royal monopolies after 1629 seems to have driven the Indians away from Ayuthia to Tenasserim, where they found trade freer from official interference. From there they could command their own vessels and Siam's rich trade with the Coromandel Coast. When Phaulkon came to power, he decided to get this commerce away from the Arabs and Indians; he therefore made the radical innovation of appointing an Englishman, Samuel White, to the

lucrative post of *shahbandar*, which formerly had always been held by either an Indian or a Siamese. This was an unfortunate move since the English company interpreted the appointment of so renowned an interloper as evidence of Siam's hatred for their company, and White pursued profitably his predecessors' traditions in the way of bribery and corruption.

All Europeans in the seventeenth century found that they had overestimated the importance of Siam's trade. The country was poor, underpopulated, and decimated by chronic warfare. The English gave up Chiengmai after attempting to trade there for two years, only to find that the peninsular trade was also declining. No Occidental energy went into increasing the country's productivity, but simply into buying and selling; and even there it was hampered by the king's key position as the country's chief merchant.<sup>7</sup>

All the foreigners had to win the favor of the king and his covetous Ministers by gifts and by discrediting their rivals. The Siamese were adepts at encouraging such discord and at making the Europeans pay for commercial privileges by helping them fight their campaigns. Warfare broke out spasmodically between the English and the Dutch, between the Portuguese and Dutch, and even between the Siamese and English and Dutch. Quarrels between the companies' agents offered great facilities for private trade, and so profitable did this become that many of the foreign agents severed relations with their companies and entered the service of the king of Siam. However, not one of the rival European companies thought Siam's trade worth the country's conquest; and one by one they withdrew from the field. The downfall of Phaulkon and his French allies, which in turn involved that of the whole trading community, further retarded the country's economic development. In all these dealings neither side was blameless. The Court's primitive commercial theories could not cope with European trade; and its capricious cruelty was matched by the Occidentals' sharp practises, venality, and ruthless self-interest.

Little is known about the state of Siam's trade in the eighteenth century. Both the English and French made a few mild attempts to resume trade relations with Siam, but the internal situation was

far from propitious. When trade finally re-awoke, the day of the great privileged companies and their jealous rivalry had passed. When Crawford visited Siam in 1822, he found commerce flourishing there without the participation of European men and ships. Commerce with Far Eastern countries was actively carried on through a large fleet of junks devoted to the Sino-Siamese trade. Special ships were built by the king to carry his goods as far as Java and Japan. The few European ships that visited Siam were treated in such a way that they were not encouraged to return without at least such protection as treaties could afford.

Chinese immigration was encouraged throughout the nineteenth century;<sup>8</sup> and Siam's trade in pepper, sugar, and cardamoms consequently enjoyed an astonishing increase for a number of decades. But the king also wanted to trade with Europe. A certain element at his Court, however, was opposed to European trade on any terms. The king's sense of weakness *vis-à-vis* Western nations made him cunning as well as avaricious. Finlayson thought that he might be persuaded to lower the duties but never to forego his monopoly. The peace that Siam had so long enjoyed had two effects on trade; it made the Siamese arrogant in dealing with strangers, and it gave the upper classes sufficient leisure to embark on commercial operations.

When a European ship arrived, the king and his Ministers insisted on buying before a general permit to trade was issued. They fixed their own prices, and that process alone took weeks. No subject thereafter dared to offer a price under that of the king. Siamese policy was to wear down the merchants' resistance by endless delays so that they would eventually lower their prices in order to be able to sell at all.

Crawford, nevertheless, was enthusiastic enough about trade prospects in Siam not to be discouraged:

This pernicious and ruinous practice is the only real obstacle to European trade in Siam, for neither duties on merchandise nor tonnage are excessive. Property is sufficiently secure and the country fertile and abounding in productions suitable to foreign trade beyond any other with which I am acquainted.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Phraklang talked to Crawford as "a keen trader rather than as a statesmen" and suggested developing the salt trade

with Bengal, his only interest was to get a supply of firearms, which Crawford did not feel authorized to grant.

The Burney Treaty of 1826 gave British ships the right to trade in Siamese ports and succeeded in lifting the arbitrary duty levied on ships in lieu of customs duties. But in this treaty the export of rice was forbidden, and the import of opium was made a crime. Numerous other monopolies and fishing rights that the people had formerly enjoyed were curtailed by the new king Nang Klao. He had declared on his accession that the Government as such would trade no more; nevertheless, the monopolies were gradually reestablished until it was remarkable that English and American trade—the latter established by treaty in 1833—survived at all.

In 1840 an English trading house was established in Bangkok, and the number of Indian merchants increased markedly. Cotton goods were exchanged for local products. The Chinese still enjoyed the major share of the country's trade; they were bound by no treaties and could travel in the interior, whereas the British, whose trade was subjected to petty official exactions, could not journey outside the capital, own land, or build houses or ships. Gradually the monopolies were resumed, but in the form of farms, sublet to the Chinese. British and American ships could get cargoes only on prohibitive terms, if at all; and both failed during the lifetime of Nang Klao to get either redress or a revision of the treaties.

The accession of Mongkut, who was both European-minded and aware of the danger inherent in the Chinese monopolies, brought a radical change. Siam's resources, even the export of rice, were opened to foreign trade; consulates were established; a tariff rate was instituted; and the interior was penetrated. Measurement duties were reduced; opium became a state monopoly; the fishery taxes were restored; and the right to trade was again introduced.

Opposition to the Bowring treaty was shown by all the privileged groups, especially the Chinese, whose trade declined while that of Europeans increased steadily. In the post-Bowring decade, Chinese junks were reduced by competition with European-owned steamers from four hundred to less than a hundred vessels.<sup>10</sup> Siamese ships dwindled in about the same proportion, until very soon 55 per cent of the country's foreign trade was carried in English bottoms. In the meantime, the value of the total commerce

rose amazingly. Dr. Mallock, an official of the East India Company, stated in 1852 that Siamese exports at that time amounted to Tcs. 5,584,000 and imports to Tcs. 4,331,000. Among these exports was a limited amount of rice and no teak at all. During Mongkut's reign the exports were pepper, rice, sugar, coconut oil, tin, iron, lead, ivory, horns, animals, resin, cotton, timber, and birds' nests. The imports were hardware, arms, cutlery, Chinese silks, soaps, glassware, bibelots, wines, tea, and opium. Bowring, quoting Pallegoix, gives figures that seem more fantastic than Mallock's. Certainly these luxury articles commanded such high prices that the great risks run by merchant vessels at the time were not enough to prevent so highly lucrative a trade.

It was the modern means of transportation, as well as the opening of the Suez Canal, that revolutionized Siam's commerce and altered her social institutions. These changes, which made possible for the first time profitable transportation over long distances, displaced the former luxury trade. Rice became an article of immense foreign demand. So great an impetus to cultivation did it furnish that any embargo on the export of rice became superfluous. The treaties with foreign powers had already supplied the security necessary to foreign commerce, which in turn developed the money exchange. Rice-land increased in value; and the vast stretches of unoccupied terrain, for which heretofore there had been no sale, began to bring income in the form of rentals. These rentals in turn made slavery no longer an economic necessity, and its abolition paved the way for a transformation of the social system.

The increasing importance of rice cultivation had the unfortunate effect of making the Siamese neglect other industries and crafts that were not so profitable, such as cotton- and silk-weaving and metalware and paper-making. Foreign-built steamers largely supplanted native boat-building and incidentally frightened away the fish. The Siamese began to import cheap manufactured articles in exchange for their raw materials. From being wholly a self-supporting people, the inhabitants of the central provinces became consumers of cheap manufactured imports, while exports were handled by a specialized group of producers. New industries and expanding agriculture partially replaced the occupations that the

commercial revolution had destroyed. As this change had been created by a revolution in the means of transportation, so its further evolution was dependent on still greater developments in the field of transport.

Steamships were introduced in 1855, three years before the first steam rice mill was erected at Bangkok; and by 1870 steamers had begun to ply regularly to and from Bangkok. The completion of the Bangkok-Saigon telegraph line made it easy to secure information about the market in Bangkok before undertaking what might prove to be a fruitless voyage to so inaccessible a port. This partially explains the fluctuations in Siam's commerce in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1866, 166 foreign vessels came to Bangkok; in 1867, 451; in 1868, 219; in 1869, 311; in 1870, 278; in 1871, 174. Although the last figures were obviously affected by the Franco-Prussian War, the people by then had begun to hoard their rice for as long as six months, thinking that foreigners would pay any price to obtain it.

The steamship *Chao Phya*, partly owned in Siam, began a regular service between Bangkok and Singapore and soon had competition. By 1884 the total number of foreign vessels coming to Bangkok numbered 400, of which more than half were British, the tonnage varying between 300 and 500 tons. About 1888 a branch of the Holt line of steamers was started on the Singapore-Bangkok run, and a few years later the Scottish Oriental Company opened a regular service with southern Chinese ports.

About 1868 the Germans began to be attracted to Siam's nascent rice industry and trade. The small German ship built especially for this trade was preferred by shippers to the larger American or British vessels. Built at small cost and manned by national crews at about half the cost of a British ship, these German vessels could afford to carry cargo at a lower figure and reduced freight rates from 25 to 50 per cent. Gradually they came to challenge the two British lines, which up to the turn of the century enjoyed a virtual monopoly. In 1897 the English were carrying 74 per cent of Siam's commerce, and the Germans only 8 per cent; but less than a decade later the tables were turned. The North German Lloyd was soon able to buy out the original British lines, and English shipping fell to 20 per cent of the whole. The years

1910-1914 were the heyday of German shipping, though there was increasing competition from the N.Y.K. lines; just before the world war German ships were doing half of Siam's carrying trade. As spoils of war the German fleet in Siamese waters was divided among the Allies, and by 1921 the English were again able to assume the lead.

Throughout the whole period Siam exported the same commodities, and the only change was in the quantity and proportion of the articles exported. By 1880 the export of sugar had dwindled to nothing, its place being taken by rice. No new products of the soil or new crafts were developed, and in general the same primitive commercial concepts prevailed. Siam's progress in the art of government was not paralleled in the sphere of business.

Work became increasingly specialized as internal communications improved. Just as the new railroads and canals permitted the shipment of rice and teak from the interior in answer to foreign demands, so they increased Siam's desire for foreign goods. From 1895 to 1906 exports increased 130 per cent and imports 70 per cent. In 1895 trade returns were officially compiled for the first time for Bangkok, and that year the produce shipped from that port was valued at \$12,000,000 (gold) and imports of foreign manufactures at about \$10,000,000 (gold), Bangkok handling 85 per cent of the trade. In the next thirty-three years trade increased ninefold.

One of the most consistent features of Siam's foreign relations has been the open door policy. Since the Bowring treaties all foreigners have been given absolutely equal commercial opportunities. Each nationality, at one time or another, has been afraid that Siam was about to show partiality at her expense; the Germans have been afraid of the French, the English of the Germans, and both the English and French of the Japanese. Before the world war the Germans tried to exclude other nations from shipping and railroad construction; but the general Siamese policy was to insist on open tenders for public works materials, and the rice millers bought boats themselves rather than submit to using German shipping exclusively.

Nevertheless, the Germans succeeded in controlling shipping, in getting a grip on rice- and teak-milling, and in capturing the

market for cheap manufactures. Other nations might make fun of their method; but the profitable results were due not only to their influence with the administration but to their efficiency, good organization, and adaptation of their goods to a particular market. They catered to the caprices, superstitions, and tastes of their several Asiatic clienteles.

The English trader, on the other hand, felt that he could disdain small profits and details. France, whose shipping was a poor third to English and German, preferred commerce on the grand scale. French manufacturers made no effort to suit the Siamese market, which wanted cheap products and frequent changes. In 1902 French commerce in Siam was valued at 500,000 francs as compared with Great Britain's 11,000,000 francs. About 1860 there had been a commercial movement towards France, initiated by the trader Lamache. But the francophobia of Mongkut's successor and then France's defeat in the war with Prussia again reduced French prestige. Thereafter, despite the proximity of Indo-China, the French did little to cultivate commercial relations with the Siamese.

Before the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1939, Norwegian and Danish vessels together accommodated about 36 per cent of Siam's export trade, British 26 per cent, and Dutch 13 per cent. Thus the war has seriously affected Siam's shipping situation. The carrying capacity of Japan, who before her war with China shipped 14 per cent of Siam's export trade, has been seriously curtailed since 1937. The amount carried in Siamese bottoms at the outset of the present war was 6 per cent—approximately the same as at the beginning of the war of 1914-18. In the interval between these wars, the percentage reached a maximum of 24 per cent in 1920, only to decline to less than 5 per cent in 1936-37. Siam's current attempt to create her own merchant marine at a time when the purchase price of ships is almost prohibitive has been inspired more by the present shortage of shipping space than by purely nationalistic motives.

### *Import Market*

The relation between Siam's import and export markets has been curious. Before the world war Siam sold almost exclusively



to Far Eastern countries and bought almost everything from Europe. One of the worst features of these international rivalries was their repercussion on the import market, in over-buying and absurdly long credits. The bazaar merchant could in this way play one firm off against another and was frequently persuaded to take the merchandise of the house offering the longest credit. This was especially dangerous in the case of Chinese merchants, whose bankruptcies were frequent and whose financial standing could only be ascertained after long study of local conditions.

In the late 1890's an effort to get competing firms to protect their common interests through a Chamber of Commerce received only half-hearted support. In 1908 an Importers' Association was formed, primarily for the purpose of restricting the too liberal credits that were still being given as the result of excessive competition. It did a good deal of useful work, but in the end the effort to dictate terms of credit proved too irksome. The present Chamber came into being in 1913, pledged not to interfere with the discretion of its members in any such way but to confine its efforts to matters in which common interests were unquestioned.

The import market is concentrated in Bangkok, where about 80 per cent of the country's trade is still handled, although during the depression the peninsular ports forged ahead through their tin and rubber exports. The Bangkok market is fundamentally very conservative. Buyers select equipment because it is British, or cheap, or because it is produced by a well-known firm, rather than as a result of investigation of relative merits.<sup>11</sup>

Selling competition is very keen especially for government business, and personal contacts are an important sales factor. Very little advertising is done. Vernacular papers, which are passed from hand to hand, have a wider circulation than their subscription figures indicate; but English and American firms have made the mistake of advertising in English papers, which reach a very limited clientele.

The large import houses probably handle more than half the imports consumed and distribute almost exclusively through thirty or forty Chinese wholesale firms in Bangkok. The first and most important method of distribution is by Chinese trading boats on rivers and canals. The second line of distribution is by rail. But

railroads do not go everywhere, and their rates are so high that a number of merchants band together to fill an entire freight car with their collective merchandise. A clerk is sent along with the goods to distribute them to the syndicate's subsidiaries and agents. As much of the internal trade is by barter, the cars are loaded at once for their return to Bangkok. As soon as new railroads are opened, Chinese shops spring up like mushrooms by their side. The Chinese merchants monopolize the distribution of the staple foodstuffs in the interior. No other group could possibly compete with them. They distribute more cheaply than any other agency as their overhead is lower and their chief profit is derived from trading in kind through their ambulatory provincial shops.

The elaborate development of the *kongsie*, or syndicate, system between European importers and Chinese wholesalers is the most interesting feature of the Siamese import market and unique in the Middle East. Through the syndicate arrangement the importers are spared the necessity of running needless credit risks with individuals. Five or six Chinese dealers, each operating a boat line and a chain of subsidiary shops, which have close relations with provincial merchants, organize to buy a staple commodity in wholesale quantities from an importer—usually a European. The syndicate can buy more cheaply than the outside dealer and can thus create a virtual monopoly. Its resources are pooled, and profits and risks are shared accordingly. This system has the advantage of minimizing the importer's credit risks, of shortening the credit terms he allows, and of generally simplifying his work by eliminating the distribution end. Of course he loses something by limiting the sale of one commodity to a particular *kongsie*, but he is likely to make up for such a loss in the volume of total sales if the *kongsie* is efficient and has a good provincial organization.

In retail selling, distribution is effected through the smaller Chinese traders, who buy solely from their compatriots in the wholesale trade. Although Bangkok has a large number of Chinese firms that are direct importers, the bulk of the retail trade is done in the bazaar, through a system practically identical with provincial distribution. Chinese wholesalers buy their supplies as much from their compatriots in Hong Kong and Singapore as from European importers. The Chinese trader is under a disadvantage

in dealing directly with Occidentals since he cannot get credit so easily with them and is unfamiliar with Western business methods. Moreover, by buying from Chinese houses, he can always undersell European importers.

In the Chinese junk-trading days, imports consisted of silk and cotton textiles, tobacco, tea, sugar, and art objects. Of these, tea and Chinese silk have now been eliminated, cotton textiles take first place; and industrial products, such as machinery, electrical apparatus, tinned foods, petrol, jute, metal, and hardware, have been added.

Cotton textiles have become Siam's chief requirement from foreign manufacturers. The small domestic weaving industry that has survived does not even begin to answer the country's needs. For some time after the war the market was heavily overstocked, but from 1923 until the depression it increased steadily.<sup>12</sup> After the depreciation of the yen, Japan began to make such headway as to alarm the British millers. By 1934 European textiles were almost wholly superseded by Japanese imports, and old stocks had to be disposed of at less than half cost. European firms dealing in piece goods either gave up that branch or closed down altogether; survival was possible only for small-staffed firms with almost no overhead charges. With the lifting of the depression, the Siamese market again began taking quality as well as price into consideration. This, in addition to the Chinese boycott on Japanese goods, resulted in a slight improvement for British textile imports.

Foodstuffs hold second place in Siam's import list. Even in depression years they amounted to 19 per cent of her total imports. Although abundantly supplied with rice, fish, and fruit, Siam is far more deficient in food products than she needs to be. The increasing demand for foreign foodstuffs shows more Westernized standards of living. Sugar has been the principal imported food, and the new Lampang factory will probably alter this situation very little. Before it was built, Javanese sugar formed 25 per cent of the total food imports.

Dairying as an organized industry is nonexistent, though Indians run a few dairies in Bangkok. Canned milk, butter, and cheese are all imported. Sweetened condensed milk is by far the most popular item among the milk imports and is fairly expensive.

During the depression the import of canned milk fell to below a fifth of its former sales.

The unnecessarily limited cultivation of vegetables has resulted in the import of both dried and fresh varieties from China. Fresh meat is also imported. The two most important sources of flour are Hong Kong and Australia, with Japan and the United States occasionally disputing this market. Canned fruit and vegetables are consumed chiefly by Europeans and the richer Asiatics, who are few in number and concentrated in Bangkok. Food imports suffer from a lack of refrigeration facilities on the steamships calling at Bangkok from Singapore and China. The Pacific Coast and Japan monopolize the sardine import trade, and Bangkok has become a dumping ground for Singapore's surplus stocks.

Liquor imports, although small when compared with the local manufacture, show that the West has definitely loosened Buddhist prohibitions on drinking. Unfortunately so much bad liquor is imported from China that the spread of alcoholism is particularly noxious. Beer still leads the list, with samshu next, followed by whiskey and brandy.

There has been a steady demand for petroleum products, especially kerosene, which is extensively used for illumination. The import fluctuates, depending on the rice season, which, if good, furnishes husks for fuel. Otherwise the petroleum imports represent the total local consumption. In the worst depression year, 1932, Siam imported, almost wholly from the Netherlands Indies, 93,830 barrels of gasolene, 188,515 of kerosene, 138,644 of lubricating oils, and 152,296 of fuel oil; these figures represent the most limited consumption.

As to the machinery and rolling-stock market, the United Kingdom furnishes about a third, with Japan and the United States following close behind. Electrical apparatus is chiefly German or American in origin. Well under a thousand automobiles are imported annually, and of these trucks head the list. In Bangkok the people can get around in trams; but in the provinces, where there is no form of land transport between the railroad and the bullock cart, the Siamese have taken to lorries.

Though leather, tobacco, and matches are still extensively imported, the quantity is decreasing because of the development

of local industries. Gunny bags, which are dependent on the rice exports, form a very considerable import item.

### *Balance of Trade*

The outstanding feature of Siamese commerce is its consistently favorable trade balance. This was the case before Siam came into commercial contact with Europe; and it continued to be so in spite of currency changes, new markets, and increasing transportation facilities.

Probably more than any other single factor, the world war affected Siam's trade. The news of its outbreak did not reach all parts of Siam at the same time because of the usual breakdown of the telegraph lines, but the same phenomenon appeared throughout the country. A few men in each district tried to corner the market in kerosene, flour, sugar, salt, and matches. Prices went up by leaps and bounds and eventually reached such heights that the Government issued an anti-speculation proclamation; whereupon all prices, with the exception of those of foodstuffs, which remained abnormally high, took a sudden fall. To stop general speculation the provincial Governors were asked to call in all the local traders and advise them to keep prices down.

The country was genuinely surprised at the extent to which so seemingly distant a war could affect its economy. Until 1914, 15 to 20 per cent of Siam's rice had gone to Europe, the bulk being sent to Hamburg and Antwerp, both of which markets were no longer available. Much of that which had gone to Singapore for re-export was affected by the embargo on reshipment then prevailing in the Straits. Other articles affected were hides, rosewood, sticklac, and cotton.

By 1915 Siam's trade was regarded as having returned to normal, but with a complete redistribution of markets. But by 1921 Great Britain again controlled the import market in about the same proportion as she had done in 1914. During the war German shipping was eliminated, and English imports were replaced by Japanese and American. The teak trade practically disappeared; but the export of minerals, particularly wolfram, increased markedly. Rice production continued as before during the early years of the war, Japan taking what had formerly gone to Europe;

but towards the end of the war and in the years following, the output increased phenomenally to meet the shortage in food supplies then felt all over the world. The price of paddy rose, and along with it the tical. The year 1919-20 saw the high peak in Siam's trade.

The partial, then the complete, embargo on Siam's rice trade imposed by the Government created for the first time in history a reversal of the favorable trade balance. From April 1920 to March 1921 Siam's exports fell to a fourth of the value of her imports. In December 1920, when the embargo was removed, the demand fell again and prices declined to pre-war levels. In the late spring of 1921 rice sales were again moving up.

In 1920, to open the eyes of Siamese and foreigners alike to the development of his country, the king established a Ministry of Commerce, which was amalgamated six years later with the Ministry of Communications, and a Board of Commercial Development consisting of foreign advisers as well as of Siamese officials. All laws affecting the development of the kingdom were first submitted to the Board, which could also exercise initiative in drafting such laws as it thought necessary. An attempt to secure the consent of the powers to the enactment of a Trademarks Law had to await the treaty revisions of the 1920's. The cooperative movement was encouraged; commercial companies were controlled and registered; savings banks were established; weights and measures were standardized; and the metric system was adopted by law. After 1920 the foreign trade of the peninsular and Gulf provinces, which was conducted independently of Bangkok, became of sufficient importance to be listed separately in the customs returns.

The decade of the 1920's witnessed an opening up of the north somewhat analogous to that of the peninsula, both of which were caused primarily by railroad construction. The journey from Bangkok to Chiangmai, which formerly required six weeks, now took only twenty-six relatively comfortable hours. A few roads were built as feeders to the railroad, many of which were practicable only for bullock carts and limited to the dry season for motor transport. But in general the means of transportation grew proportionately to the country's trade. In 1910 there had been

only three bullock carts in the Chiangmai region, and around Lampang the few bullock carts that existed were owned by the local Chao. In 1926 there were 160 motor cars registered in the Lao capital.

The new road from Lampang to Chiengsen could have tapped a more fertile rice land; but it nevertheless caused a stream of emigration to the Chiengrai region, which until then had been virtually unpopulated except for hill tribes. Chiengrai, a village formerly deserted because of frequent raids from across the Burmese frontier, grew into a big town. Good land, which had heretofore been owned in small patches or deserted after a couple of harvests, began to be taken up by increasing numbers of immigrants from the south. Bus transportation along this road was amazingly cheap. Chinese traders began to follow in the immigrants' wake and to replace local merchants in the village markets.

Even clothes in the north have shown a marked change. Formerly it was rare to see a silk *pasin*, but now everybody has at least one. Social custom has shown a corresponding metamorphosis. Lampang has become a boom town and the center of the sugar, tanning, weaving, teak, and tobacco industries. The north is still poor, underpopulated, and disease-ridden; but it is a country with a rich future. Communications there have yielded higher returns in proportion to the investment than elsewhere.

### *The Depression and Recovery*

Early in 1929 the Financial Adviser warned the commercial community not to expect that Siam's foreign trade, which reached its peak in 1927-28, would continue to grow so rapidly as it had during the past five years. Not that Sir Edward Cooke foresaw the slump; he probably imagined that Siam's trade would remain on the same level. In 1927 the total foreign trade reached the sum of Tcs. 416,000,000; the next year it fell to Tcs. 388,000,000, and again in 1930 to Tcs. 309,000,000—a fall of 25 per cent in three years. An analysis of the details of this decline throws more light on the pre-depression situation. Imports in 1927 reached Tcs. 176,000,000, but in 1928 they fell to Tcs. 169,000,000; in 1930 they were down again, after a temporary recovery in 1929, to Tcs. 156,800,000. On the other side of the trade balance, the value

of exports slumped steadily over the same three-year period. In 1931 the value of exports was less than the value of imports for the first time since the rice embargo. As compared with the peak year 1927, the value of exports had fallen 36 per cent, while that of imports had fallen only 10 per cent. Rice exports alone had declined 40 per cent in three years with no prospect of an improved price.

When the depression hit Siam in 1930, every market had surplus stocks; and the local purchasing power was already seriously curtailed by two poor rice crops in succession. Bangkok importers felt justified in expecting a quiet period while the country recovered, but instead of this the lifting of the current boycott on Japanese goods gave them a chance to dispose of some of their stocks of cotton and woolen textiles. Competition began on a scale never before experienced, and price-cutting reached absurd levels. Silver declined in value, still further lowering the masses' buying power; and the situation was aggravated by a heavy slump in exports. It was left to the peninsular towns to redeem to some extent the poor showing of the port of Bangkok. Siam was unable to buy quality commodities, and the depression simply accentuated the changing origin of her imports.

Apparently businessmen could not adjust themselves to conditions so drastically different from those of 1929. This price-cutting war was the outcome of a sudden influx of goods at a time when purchasing power was low, and it drove many formerly affluent importers close to the verge of bankruptcy. The maintenance of the tical on gold for six months after sterling went off further hurt the trade position. In 1931 the credit situation was unimproved, and the scarcity of cash in up-country districts affected tax collections adversely. The coming into effect of the new tariff added another complicating factor to an already difficult situation.

By the spring of 1932 Siam was feeling the slump as badly as any other country. The cash return from foreign trade was less than half of what it had been a few years before. However, a fall in the quantity of rice exports was averted; and devaluation of the tical helped the farmer to feel more confidence in the salability of his crop. Teak exports, as well as all imports, continued to dwindle, although the cheaper tical helped the merchandise vaguely



classified under the customs' heading of 'other goods.' The prices fetched by Siamese exports in 1932 were the lowest recorded in the Annual Statement of Foreign Trade, and the average price of white rice was roughly half of what it had been in 1921-23. Since the value of imports was the lowest for sixteen years, the visible balance of trade was the most favorable ever recorded.

Talk of further devaluation of the tical in 1933 indicated the status of the country's trade. Rice was badly off, and comparatively few mills were working. The political disturbances of October caused a marked drop in the paddy supplies; and even when normal railroad connections were re-established, there was no increase in the paddy shipped. This, of course, had nothing to do with internal conditions as the lack of demand came from the main rice markets abroad. The current crop prices were 20 per cent lower than for the preceding year.

Plans of national economy were vaguely talked of, and their tenor did not reassure conservatives. Far Eastern markets were closing to Siam; Java, then Japan, and finally China and Malaya were placing taxes on Siam's rice. Siamese trade was left to look after its own interests, while competitors, because of their colonial status, enjoyed protected markets in Europe. The depression was teaching Siam that all her emphasis on expansion of production was unavailing without the assurance of markets. Tariffs made the sale of products possible only at prices considerably below cost. A Department of Commerce was created to supplement the efforts of private firms to place national produce in foreign markets.

In 1933 rice provided 57.5 per cent of the exports, as contrasted with 61.7 per cent for the previous year. Gold accounted for 9.8 per cent of the exports, and teak for only 2.9 per cent. The total value of exports showed a reduction of Tcs. 8,500,000 as compared with 1932. The only item that was up was the tin exports from provincial ports; the only important increase in imports was in wine, beer, and spirits. If it had not been for opium, the Government's imports would have gone down a further Tcs. 3,000,000. The visible trade balance was still on the right side.

In 1934 the favorable balance of trade was Tcs. 12,000,000 below that for 1932, but the export of bullion had been almost halved. Imports showed an increase of 3.9 per cent over 1933 but

were still 7 per cent less than in 1932. Total exports showed a further decrease of 5.5 per cent over 1933, but by this time they were 7.4 per cent more than in 1932. The year 1934 witnessed the largest quantitative export of rice, but it also brought the lowest price on record. However, a rise in tin and rubber prices somewhat offset the decline in the price of rice. Markets continued to close down, and the new ones that were found in compensation did not wholly solve Siam's situation. There was a greater realization that Siam's problem antedated the depression and that a fundamental change of policy in regard to farming was essential. It was recognized that agriculture and commerce must find some working agreement, and that Siam must seek new markets and sell to them high-grade, standardized, and specialized produce.

The Government, which was assuming ever more legal responsibility for such commerce as affected the public welfare, passed a Bankruptcy Law in January 1934. However, the increase in the number of bankruptcy cases during the depression year was not matched by the amounts proved and admitted in the courts. Legal measures might be useful as a last resource, but Bangkok had learned not to expect too much from them. From 1920 to 1925 the amounts won averaged Tcs. 3,121,479, and during the next five years the annual average fell to Tcs. 1,640,835. In 1933 a dividend was paid out to 655 creditors from 27 bankrupt estates, which netted them 6.72 per cent of the money that was due them. The loss of 93 per cent may be taken as explaining the decrease in business under the Bankruptcy Law.

Even pessimists had to admit that Siam's business position improved throughout the year 1935. After the crop failure two years before, business was conducted with greater caution, and there were very few failures. This improvement was doubtless due to the higher price of rice, of which dealers did not take advantage to overtrade—the usual response to a rise in commodity prices. At the same time there was appreciation that Japan, which had come to dominate the import market, was the country most likely to benefit from the improved situation. Even if better conditions continued, European goods would be driven more and more from the open market, as had happened in the case of textile imports. European importers were beginning to confine themselves to the

sale of certain brands and a limited number of special lines. Up to this time no firm had felt that it could afford to deal in anything less than general merchandise.

Chinese traders were showing an increasing inclination to import direct and to dispense with the services of the European houses. Imports from the West had come to be handled more and more by firms whose overhead was small—one-man businesses where profits were precarious and were only possible at all through an intimate knowledge of the local market. Siam had obviously become one of the battlegrounds in the ever-growing trade war between Japan and Great Britain, but with an even slight return to prosperity she showed a marked preference for better quality and ceased to be concerned solely with price.

Japan's remarkable conquest of the Siamese market was shown in the increase in her exports to Siam during the years 1932-36, which rose from 8 per cent to 25 per cent of the country's total imports. Like Germany before the war, Japan was teaching the West that to trade successfully the individual market's requirements must receive specific attention. The second interlude of British domination was over; gone were the days when the English merchant could sit in his office, deal with buyers through intermediaries, and dictate what was best suited to the Siamese market.

Imports in 1935 were higher in value than at any time during the preceding three years even though they included no opium. The value of exports was higher than it had been for the four preceding years. Despite the fall in prices rice accounted for 57 per cent of the total value of exports, but this was a drop as compared with nearly 73 per cent in 1927-28. Tin retained second place, making up more than 15 per cent of the total. Bullion accounted for only 6.7 per cent; rubber for 5.3 per cent; and teak for 2.6 per cent. The total value of imports came to Tcs. 101,000,000, but this was Tcs. 27,000,000 less than it had averaged for the five years 1929-34. The drop came principally in foodstuffs, which nevertheless retained second place. The total trade for 1935 amounted to Tcs. 274,000,000,—better than in 1934 but just about half of what it had been in 1927-28. Sixty-eight per cent of the exports went to Hong Kong and Malaya. The origin of imports is much harder to analyze because of transshipments; but 20.76 per cent of

them came directly from Japan, and the Netherlands Indies held second place with 14.5 per cent. China regularly took third place among the nations exporting to Siam, and neither the depression nor competition seemed seriously to affect Siam's needs from that country. As a market for Siamese exports, China took second place after the British Empire; and in the case of both countries the balance of trade was in Siam's favor. In accordance with the shift in Siam's markets, Cuba and South America rose to third place on the export list.

Restriction measures were reflected in the tin and rubber figures for 1936. Quantitatively there was little change. In 1931-32 Siam exported 262,587 piculs of tin, and in 1935-36, 237,571 piculs; but the value of these exports had risen from Tcs. 13,433,227 to Tcs. 23,374,203. Rubber figures showed similar benefits. During the slump years, 1931-33, Siam's rubber exports totalled 6,500,000 kilos, valued at well under a million ticals. In 1933-34 the first improvement came, and by 1935-36 they had advanced to 26,600,000 kilos, valued at well over a million sterling. Siam's prestige as well as her economic future had been greatly improved by her successes in these international restriction battles. She could not fill her tin quota, but she produced to capacity in rubber.

Throughout 1936 and 1937 Siam's finances continued to be sound in spite of large purchases abroad and expensive industrialization at home. Her new treaties crowned her fiscal and political autonomy, and nationalism as the basis of her economic policy was making great strides. A rising resentment against the predominance of foreign control of the country's industries and commerce was shown time and again in Assembly discussions. Prodded along in this way, the Government was taking an increasing hand in furthering the country's economic progress.

The shrinkage in markets continued but was less apparent because of the smaller exportable surplus of rice. Siam was not successful in finding new outlets for her produce and was being shut out by the rising tariff walls in India and China. The expanding practice of commercial *quid pro quo* made Siam ever more conscious of her vulnerable status as a non-colony. The problem was diplomatic in this sense; but it was economic from the viewpoint of improving the farmer's position, which was as generally

bad as ever despite the expansion of the cooperative credit movement.

The fact that there was only one serious failure in the bazaar, in spite of the intensity of competition and the dubious business methods employed, showed that business conditions in Bangkok were not seriously affected by the turmoil in nearby China. But the bankruptcy of the leading Chinese firm, Kwang Koh Long, brought hardship to hundreds of families. This enormous organization had five branches in Bangkok and ten banks among its creditors; it functioned also in other countries. There was a decline of about 16 per cent in imports from Japan as the result of the Chinese boycott in Bangkok, and rice exports to China also suffered from the Japanese blockade of the Chinese coast. In partial compensation for these losses, state revenues profited by the income derived from the larger immigration fees paid by the great influx of Chinese. Imports rose by 16.5 per cent over the preceding year, largely as a result of heavy purchases of unmanufactured tobacco. Although it was attributed to the general trade revival, the rising cost of living was a matter of general concern.

The sharp increase in the price of beef, for example, was due to the new organization of Indian cattle traders, who were no longer at the mercy of the organized Chinese butchers. The Chinese had forced down the price of cattle so much that it had meant loss not only to the Indian traders but to the Siamese farmers as well. Not only was the price of beef up; but the prices of pork, rice, and vegetables, none of them luxury articles, showed the same upward trend.

Local standards of living were approximating more and more to those of the outside world, and this was clearly reflected in the customs figures. More hosiery, cosmetics, clocks, soap, handkerchiefs, sewing machines, and shoes were imported. Popular tastes in foodstuffs were changing. The quantity of biscuits imported nearly doubled over the previous year; margarine increased by 50 per cent, sardines rose enormously in value, and there was a general increase in tinned milk, beer, and sugar.

The 1938 rice crop was a great improvement over that of 1937. As rice still makes up about three-fourths of the total value of exports from the port of Bangkok any improvement in the rice

trade acts as a powerful lever in improving conditions in other trades. In 1937-38 rice accounted for 44.5 per cent of the total value of exports, as compared with 69.3 per cent a decade before. The second most important export was tin, which accounted for 22.1 per cent of the total value—an improvement in both quantity and price. Rubber made a big advance as compared with the figure for 1927-28, accounting for 13.4 per cent of the total, though this was not as much as the peak reached the year before. Teak and other woods held fourth place with 6.1 per cent in value. Export of bullion declined by Tcs. 3,200,000 as compared with the year 1932, when it reached Tcs. 23,000,000. Imports from Japan represented Tcs. 22,000,000, or 19.6 per cent of the total, which was a decline from the 25.6 per cent of the preceding year but was still the leading figure if imports from the British Empire are not taken as a unit. Singapore held the next place with 15.98 per cent; the United Kingdom 12.23 per cent; Penang 10.54 per cent; Hong Kong 7.64 per cent; Germany 6.23 per cent; and the United States 5.04 per cent. Siam received imports from some 59 places; of these 18 were in the British Empire, which thereby furnished over 52 per cent of the total value—Tcs. 58,300,000 out of Tcs. 111,800,000, or an increase of 1.6 per cent over the preceding year.

Penang took first place as regards exports with 24.29 per cent of the total value; Singapore and Hong Kong followed, and Japan came fourth with only 3.49 per cent. Japan's trade was important, but not so overwhelmingly important as was popularly imagined. Eighteen ports in the British Empire took over 84.9 per cent of the total exports—Tcs. 144,000,000 out of a total of Tcs. 169,400,000. This represented a decrease of 8.1 per cent in value over the previous year. The total volume of trade came to Tcs. 281,317,000.

The great rise in the value of exports in 1938-39 over the preceding year, from Tcs. 162,492,804 to Tcs. 204,422,088, was due to the large export of bullion as a result of currency maneuvers and of the bumper rice crop. The percentage of rice exports to total exports was 47.65 as compared with 65.40 in 1928-29; and in the case of tin, rubber, and teak, the respective percentages were 14.58, 12.23, and 3.27 in 1938-39, as compared with 6.92, 1.24, and 4.45 in 1928-29.

The last few years have witnessed a consistent series of efforts

to control foreign trade. In October 1937 an Act for the Prevention of Profiteering was passed to regulate prices and profits on essential commodities. Though it was ostensibly meant for emergencies and to be used against the Chinese middlemen, it was potentially dangerous to foreign interests since it enabled the Government to curb their profits.

This was followed in the spring of 1938 by two similar acts: the Bangkok Control Act, and an Act requiring Bangkok traders to register their businesses at the Ministry of Commerce. A further bill to control foreign trade was introduced in the Assembly in September 1938, which more than any other measure indicated how Siam had jumped on to the nationalistic bandwagon. Under this law, the importer of foreign goods was to get a permit that would be contingent upon the purchase of Siamese produce by the exporting country to the value of 50 per cent of her exports to Siam. Realizing that Siam's needs and markets could never be made to tally so neatly, the Government was able to dismiss this draft from the agenda. In 1939, as a war measure, the Government passed bills for the control of imports and exports and attempted to fix prices to check speculation.

Siam certainly cannot be blamed for taking retaliatory commercial measures, but in view of her unbalanced economy it is a short-sighted policy. Economic self-sufficiency means power versus welfare economy. Expenditure in Siam today regularly follows the Adam Smith formula that defense is better than opulence. The form this feeling takes, however, is modified by the employment problem, the farmers' indebtedness, and existing trade agreements; but it is essentially based on a *saave-qui-peut* psychology.

Siam is a rich country, potentially if not actually. To enjoy the wealth that is latently hers, the country still needs foreign capital, technique, and enterprise. In time Siam can develop all these herself, but in the interval she must depend on the foreigner, from whom she can exact a percentage of the profits through various types of tolls and imposts. This intermediary stage cannot be dispensed with, no matter how nationalistically her Assembly would like to legislate. That its attitude is seriously appreciated is shown by the steady exodus of foreign business men from Siam ever since the revolution

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## XIV · INDUSTRY

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### HANDICRAFTS

In his survey of 1934 Andrews came to the conclusion that there was no such thing as a Siamese family whose income was derived entirely from handicrafts. In the three self-sufficing areas crafts accounted for more income than agriculture, but that was because there was a less regular market for agricultural produce than for manufactured articles. Because more communities were self-supporting in food than in utensils, there was a greater commercial demand for craft products. Few craftsmen exist in the central commercialized area, and manufactured articles are brought there from urban centers. The old artisans, whose livelihood depended wholly on the exercise of their crafts in temples or princely workshops, are a thing of the past.

The replacement of the aristocracy by commercial farmers as buyers of handicraft products was a distinctive feature of Siam's modernization. The break-up of the huge households of the nobility and the development of markets and money exchange enabled the farmers in the rice-exporting regions to buy articles produced by the artisans. But the farmers' surpluses did not represent sufficient purchasing power to permit complete specialization by the artisans, with the result that the commercialization of the crafts has been far from complete.

Most Siamese households still make many of the articles of daily use, and usually it is the women of the family who do the weaving and pottery-making.<sup>1</sup> Although women also work in the fields, one of them usually stays at home, caring for the children, cooking the meals, and doing some sort of craft work. The men, when not actually farming, stay less at home and prefer to attend cockfights, visit friends, or make merit. But it is the men who make the apparatus and implements needed in fishing and farming, and it is they who are the artisans when crafts become specialized. The prepara-



tion and sale of ordinary foods in the market centers are almost entirely in Chinese hands, whereas the cooking and sale of fruits and cakes are done almost wholly by Siamese women.

The frequently stated policy of the constitutional Government is the encouragement of cottage industries. Periodically an Assembly member asks for data as to the progress effected, and the Government monotonously replies that the situation is still being studied. Some such industries have already been established, and still more will be after a suitable location has been found. For this purpose large sums are being set aside in the budget, and a department has been organized under the Minister of Economic Affairs. The development of cottage industries is extremely important since off-season occupations must be found for the rice-farmers after the crop is harvested. A recent step in this direction was taken with the passing of the Kitchen Gardens Act in October 1939. This Act requires householders living outside the municipal areas to cultivate vegetables and breed livestock to meet their own needs. This measure was largely motivated by fears of a food shortage resulting from the war.

As most Siamese are engaged in either farming or fishing, which leave them periods of unutilized leisure, certain crafts develop that do not demand full-time labor, such as boat-building, pottery, weaving, and brick-making. The growth of the export trade not only created new industries but affected existing crafts as well. Elderly persons in Siam still remember the time when the clothing worn by the Siamese even around Bangkok was mainly spun and woven by the women of the households. Among farmers generally there was a purely domestic industry that no longer exists except in the remote northeast. Paper-making and hat-making are other handicrafts that Siamese women have largely abandoned. A hundred years ago Siam had a flourishing sugar and metal industry, but the development of the rice export trade and the introduction of railways and roads are putting an end to the old self-supporting economy.

### *Weaving*

Today weaving is potentially the most important industry since a good market for textiles already exists in Siam.<sup>2</sup> Suitable raw

materials are produced in the country, but in small quantities; and the little surplus of cotton that the farmer raises cannot be marketed for lack of communications. Weaving has almost entirely disappeared from the south and center of Siam. Japanese textiles are so cheap and so bright-colored that they are much more popular than the home-made article, even though they wear out more quickly. Even cheap imitations of the *pasin*, the traditional skirt of the Lao women, are now manufactured abroad.

Weaving was revived by the Chinese in the northeast during the world war and has partially survived to this day. In Korat the Chinese have introduced the percussion shuttle, which triples the output and makes weaving almost automatically simple. This type of shuttle, which any carpenter can make, will have to be adopted universally if the industry is to expand.

In spite of its very limited success in cotton-growing, the Government announced in 1936 that it was going to standardize and improve the weaving industry by building a cotton factory under the Ministry of Defense, a silk factory under the Ministry of the Interior, and a general textile factory under the Ministry of Education. Machinery was imported from Germany, but the first results were not good. The Government then sent experts to Japan to study tropical cotton, and there they learned that the fiber of Siamese cotton required the spiral to go to the left rather than to the right. This slight technical change made an enormous difference in the output. What may much more seriously undermine the Government's encouragement of this industry is the encroachment of the Chinese in the north and east. They have already come to control the weaving in Lampang but so far have not affected Lampun production.

### *Dyeing*

The vegetable dyes that were formerly used in every village were very beautiful but sombre in color. Now aniline dyes—cheap, gaudy, and varied in color—have penetrated everywhere and have displaced the local product. The demand for foreign dye-stuffs is steadily increasing. A few Siamese dyes are still used and even exported, notably a red dye made from sappanwood, which has an exclusive, if small, market in China. The *kele*, an

orange dye, is also sent abroad, particularly to Java for the batik industry. A few local concerns that dye cottons and silks use the black dye produced from the *maklua* berry. The dye is fast and does not damage the fabric; but as the berries must be collected before they are ripe and used when fresh, there is no export trade in this article. However, large quantities of Chinese silk are brought to Siam to be dyed with this dye and then re-exported to China or Singapore. It is interesting that in the export list of a country that produces hardly any silk, one finds the item of 43,400 bales of silk valued at Tcs. 773,000, in addition to considerable cotton cloth re-exported after dyeing.

Cutch, or *sisiab*, is an extract from the heartwood of a small tree that grows wild throughout northern Siam. At present it is used mainly for chewing purposes; but in recent years the Siam Industries Company has been using it for dyeing and tanning leather. The cutch trees also yield a gum, which is a good substitute for gum arabic, and can be used as durable timber and as fuel.

The deep color of cutch limits its use as a tanning agency, but experimentation and planting would undoubtedly improve its commercial qualities. The production of cutch, which is now carried on almost entirely in the dry season when there is little other work to be done, could be much more economical if it were placed on a commercial basis.

### *Lacquer*

The foundation of all lacquer is a resin from the rak tree. This tree is fairly common throughout Siam, but the lacquer industry has become the specialty of Chiangmai and its environs. The manufacture of a small quantity of rough lacquer for local use goes back hundreds of years, but only in Chiangmai has it figured as an article of trade. The bulk of the lacquer ware is made less on wood than on a woven bamboo foundation. It is hard to estimate the number of people involved in this industry or the amount of work they turn out. Lacquering is done in regular factories. But the number of workers employed varies from day to day; and some of the preliminary work, such as plaiting and engraving, is done by the women in their homes. The number of workmen in this industry probably does not exceed 600, and the annual output

is not above 100,000 articles for the whole of Chiengmai. The average price of any article regardless of size is roughly one tical.

This industry is now wholly confined to local markets, but it could be expanded for export as the supply of raw materials is almost unlimited. At present, however, the technique is crude compared to that used in the Burmese product.

### *Basketry and Carpentry*

Basketry is done everywhere in Siam, but not on a commercial basis. Formerly there was a vogue for palm-leaf hats, and these were the product of specialists in certain communities. The rattan and bamboo hats that the rice-farmers formerly used have now been replaced by the Japanese felt. The trend towards Western clothing has been so great that the Assembly, in an effort to stem the tide that was flowing strongly against an indigenous industry, tried to enforce the use of native hats as part of the school children's uniform.<sup>3</sup>

Mats and a sort of wicker furniture of a coarse and not very durable variety are produced in nearly every village. Most of the furniture is made from rattan; but bamboo is the material most commonly used in all basketry, though the stems of the climbing fern are utilized for the finest small-scale basketwork.

In the country districts most households attend to their own carpentry needs, which are fairly elementary, and build their own boats, carts, ploughs, and other agricultural implements. The construction of motor launches has now been grafted on to the traditional boat-building craft, and most of the machine shops that have sprung up are run by the Chinese.

### *Metal Work*

Metal work is one of the few really specialized crafts in Siam, and officials have recently tried to revive it on a commercial scale. The Siamese peasants have always used silver and bronze almost as much as iron, both as ornamentation and for household articles. Originally iron was probably used solely in weapons. Blacksmithery is nowadays the specialty of the Chinese at the market centers and of the Annamites at Chantabun. The working of silver has in the past been a Siamese preserve, but the Chinese have now become

serious competitors in this field. Bronze has come to be used chiefly in the temples, and this industry is carried on either by monks or meritorious villagers. The raw materials needed for developing a large-scale metal industry are lacking in Siam, and the market is so small that it is more economic to import machinery from the West than to attempt to develop local production. What iron is now used—chiefly for the 130,000 begging bowls of the Buddhist priests—is imported. Niello work is one of the few indigenous arts, and the standard achieved is high despite the primitive apparatus employed.

### *Pottery*

The manufacture of pottery at Sawanoloke is one of the country's oldest industries. But the lack of proper clay and the decline in quality and workmanship resulting from the Burmese invasion have reduced what was formerly an art to a specialized industry for making earthenware household utensils. Coconut shells, bamboos, and gourds provide all that is strictly necessary in the line of containers.

Some of the Mon villages continue to make a pottery that is superior to the crude Siamese product and have in some cases commercialized their output to the point of hiring labor. The best of the rather poor Siamese product is a green glazed ware made and sold at Chiangmai. The pottery that is made in Siam is adequate in quality and utility to the local demand but shows little prospect of commercial development.

## MECHANIZED INDUSTRIES

### *Rice Mills and Sawmills*

Of the new industries introduced through Western contacts, rice-milling and saw-milling are the most important; and their development has resulted in an increased demand for transportation facilities. These industries require full-time labor and are usually carried on by the Chinese.

Scientific technique was introduced primarily to increase the quantity and improve the quality of the product exported, and secondarily in order to cut down transportation costs. The rice-

milling industry was originally in the hands of Germans but soon came under Chinese control. There are now about 72 mills in Siam, of which 62 are steam-driven, using rice husks as fuel.<sup>4</sup> Two are run by motor, for which fuel has to be imported; and eight are electrically driven, the power being supplied by the Government station, which is partially fuelled by rice husks. Until recently this industry was wholly in Chinese hands, from the coolie labor to its management. But in 1939 the Government-sponsored Thai Rice Company was created and took over eleven mills from their Chinese owners. In the provinces there are at present about 600 mills. Most of them are smaller than those in Bangkok, but in the aggregate they represent an important investment.

The rice mills are important customers of Western machines. The leading suppliers of machinery are the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany. The United States started only in 1924-25 with a negligible share in this trade, but within four years its business multiplied ten-fold.

Among the modern industries, sawmills are second to rice mills in importance. There are seven large teakwood sawmills, chiefly for the export trade, in the Menam above Bangkok. Five of them are managed by the major European teak companies, and two by Chinese. There are additional sawmills for domestic consumption, the most important of which are at Bandon and Siratsha.

### *Spirits and Alcohol*

The manufacture of arak liquor distilled from rice is a Government monopoly. One of the most noxious phases of extraterritoriality was the inclusion of a clause into all the Bowring-model treaties exempting alcohol from payment of even the standard 3 per cent import duty. The demoralization of the people that resulted from the ensuing inundation of the country with European and Chinese liquor was such that the king eventually succeeded in forcing through a general 10 per cent duty on all alcoholic imports.

The importation of liquor, even when curtailed, has effected a great change in Siamese drinking habits. In 1883 Sapatam was about the only place where palm trees grew in sufficient abundance to provide intoxicating drink. Few shops sold this output; and the

people, except for the poorest classes, preferred the popular provincial beverage made from rice. The upper classes who drank it did so secretly for fear of losing caste. Custom prescribed that when servants became intoxicated they were to be put in chains and beaten soundly. Foreign education proved to be the chief agent of the change in drinking habits, which has extended even to the Siamese women. The older generation still looks askance at it; both their native conservatism and their Buddhist principles are against it.

By 1913 brandy, whiskey, and beer had become both cheap and readily available. The success of French importers in the local market induced competition from Java, and the Siamese soon came to prefer the Javanese liquor because of its stronger taste and cheaper cost. The consumption of both foreign and domestic spirits in Siam was so definitely on the increase that dealers in imitation whiskey and brandy sprang up like mushrooms. The bulk of the import trade no longer came from France, but from Java, and was handled by three or four European firms. Chinese arak, the consumption of which was also increasing, was, of course, wholly Chinese-controlled. In 1916 it was estimated that out of 4,000 liquor shops in Bangkok, 600 dealt in imitation arak.<sup>5</sup> The extent to which this trade in hybrid liquor had grown in quantity and profits was shown in a raid on Chinese shops seven years later when only a small percentage of the genuine article was discovered among the quantities seized.

As part of its program for the reduction of foreign imports and the utilization of local materials, the Government encouraged the opening of a brewery in 1934 by Phya Bhiromaya Bhakdi. A brewing plant was bought from Germany at the cost of Tcs. 400,000, and a German expert was brought in to erect it. The new factory, known as the Boon Rawd Brewery, was capitalized at Tcs. 1,000,000 and was scheduled to have a capacity of 30,000 bottles a day. This pioneer effort was an immediate success. Liquor imports fell off, but the higher duty simultaneously placed on them had certainly as much effect as competition from the cheaper local beer. At the end of the first two years 6 per cent dividends were distributed, and in 1938 the new profit was 12 per cent on the paid-up capital.

The sale of state-distilled liquor rose from 5,700,000 litres in 1934 to 9,050,000 in 1938. This was the result of a vigorous campaign against the widespread illicit distillation. In 1931 higher excise duties had been imposed, but these were reduced three years later when the Government inaugurated a policy of reducing the price of its liquor in the more depressed areas so as to lessen the incentive to contraband. The following year more distilleries were opened in the heavily populated areas, and new flavors thought to resemble whiskey and brandy were added to the official brands. Later on, considerable success was achieved by an industrial scheme to supply spirits from a central distillery operated by the Excise Department to all easily accessible parts of Siam. The year 1936 showed a growth of 11.1 per cent in government revenue from the spirits excise, the first substantial increase for some years. The Financial Adviser, in his 1937 report, attributed this to the price-reducing policy, the inauguration of a central distillery, and the reorganization of provincial distribution.

Within recent years further efforts to increase the spirits excise have been made along the same lines. The revenue for the whole department in 1938 amounted to Tcs. 7,278,607, about half of which came from the excise on spirits. For ordinary spirits, reductions in price were to be made in eleven more provinces. Forty-one central provinces are now supplied direct from the government distillery, and the rest by licensed distilleries. Sales continue to increase over preceding years. Three ships have been lent by the navy to help curtail smuggling, and an agreement was made with Indo-China establishing control over the Mekong.

### *Bricks*

Brick came into great popularity during the palace- and *wat*-building era of Siam's history. More durable than adobe and more available than stone, brick was used as the foundation material of houses and streets in modern Bangkok. Most of the labor in the brick trade is Mon, and the whole industry is badly in need of technical supervision. Moreover, the industry has to contend with the aversion of the Siamese landlords to renting out their land for brick-making since it disfigures the property and makes it unfit for subsequent paddy cultivation.<sup>6</sup> Their conservatism has been such



that very few of them yet realize that one acre of brick soil brings in more money in a year than twenty acres under rice cultivation.

The raw materials used in the manufacture of tiles and bricks are available everywhere in Siam. In fact, the making of both is so easily undertaken by amateurs all over the country that the commercial development of the industry is practically confined to Bangkok and the larger urban centers. A much more fundamental difficulty in the way of this industry's development is the growing popularity of reinforced cement.

### *Matches*

In an average pre-depression year Siam used 400,000,000 boxes of matches. By 1929 the quantity of match imports had declined because of the growth of their local manufacture; the import duty on matches that year brought in Tcs. 1,200,000. After the tariff rates were raised in 1931, imports fell off much more markedly; and the local factories, which had to import all their materials, were also affected. As a result, the import and excise duties together yielded only about Tcs. 1,000,000 in 1932, or less than the former import duty alone.

Two big match factories, the Minsae and Tung Ah Companies, were set up in Bangkok by the Borneo Company, agents for the Swedish Match Company. As a result, a subsidiary cottage industry for the making of match boxes grew up; and the whole industry came to be important in the lives of the 3,500 Siamese to whom it was giving employment. The further tariff increase in the spring of 1933 upset this industry, which was simultaneously suffering from the smuggling then being carried on across both the Burmese and Malayan frontiers. As permanent handicaps, Siam has comparatively costly labor and lacks materials with which to produce matches as cheaply as Japan.

Until 1933 Siam's tariff on matches was light enough not to be passed on to the consumer; but subsequent tariff measures had the effect of closing down the two chief match factories. The increased price put Siamese matches beyond the average Siamese budget; and others who could still afford to buy joined the poor in using every possible device to avoid paying two extra *satangs* on each box. The local companies cut prices, but business became so bad that in

December 1934 they came to an agreement to restrict output. Matches and mechanical lighters continued to be smuggled into Siam on a large scale; and it was this that finally induced the Government in 1937 to reduce duty to one *satang* per box.

### *Cement*

Ever since Siam began building railroads, bridges, and buildings, she has been a heavy purchaser of cement. The raw materials for making first-class cement are available in the country, as was proved by tests made as long ago as 1895. For years, however, the Norresundby variety controlled the local market; and when cheaper cement was needed, it was imported from Haiphong.

The first attempt to run a local cement factory failed from lack of financial support. In 1913 the king became interested in the new Siam Cement Company to the extent of becoming a large shareholder, and many of the promoters of the first company—both English and Siamese—also backed this new enterprise. Although Danish machinery and technicians were used, Siamese capital predominated; and this was the first purely industrial Siamese enterprise of any magnitude. In 1915 a factory was erected five miles outside Bangkok, with facilities for rail and water transport. The cement produced was of such good quality that it rapidly acquired a local market. After the enlargement of the factory in 1921 the yearly output amounted to 140,000 casks. Of the raw materials required, clay is found locally in almost inexhaustible quantities; chalk is brought by rail from a point 180 miles to the north; and coal is either supplied by a Siamese company or imported from Indo-China. The only expensive item is gypsum, which is found locally but in regions far from the railways. Before the depression about 300 laborers were employed. Housing conditions are good, and experiments are being made with labor insurance and savings facilities.

The Siam Cement Company chose the depression year of 1931 to double its plant's capacity. Although a protective duty on foreign cement was applied that same year, the currency situation militated somewhat against the profits of the company, which had by then opened a small export trade with Singapore. But being largely untouched by world market conditions—except in so far

as they affected local buying power—the company went forward rapidly and has regularly paid a 7-8 per cent dividend. Foreign cements pay a duty of 1.13 *satangs* a kilo, as compared with the tax of 0.21 *satangs* on Siamese cement.

Between 1936 and 1939 Siam's cement production increased by over 26,000,000 kilos; and during the same period imports declined from 12,800,000 to 4,300,000 kilos. The cement market is more than holding its own and is even looking forward to further large-scale expansion after the port of Bangkok is improved. The saturation point in cement consumption has by no means been reached.

### *Glass*

In 1935 the Ministry of Economic Affairs distributed a pamphlet to the public with a view to stimulating interest in a glass industry for Siam. The writer, C. J. House, stated that Siam possessed abundant supplies of sand and limestone for the manufacture of glass, but that sodium carbonate would have to be imported since no factory existed in the country for its manufacture from salt. Many samples of sand from various parts of Siam have been examined, and six are found suitable for making white bottles; the rest can be used for bottle glass. So far, however, no steps have been taken towards the establishment of a glass industry.

### *Leather*

The tanning industry furnishes one of the most interesting examples of missionary enterprise in Siam. Before the world war Dr. Howell Vincent came to the boys' school at Lampang, where he experimented with tanning leather. On his furlough he received help financially and technically, and on his return to Lampang he set up equipment for splitting leather. The people of Lampang became enthusiastic about the enterprise since it added to their income from rice, which the inadequate rainfall made precarious. In 1920 it was taken over by a Lao of Lampang, Nai Noi.

The nascent industry has, however, made no real commercial dent in the country. In 1932, of the 10,779 pairs of leather shoes imported into Siam, the great majority came from the United Kingdom. The market for such goods is confined to Europeans and the better class of Siamese since the peasants and Chinese wear

wooden clogs, sandals, or rubber-soled canvas shoes. A domestic shoe-making industry exists, run for the most part by Chinese, who are skilled in copying imported shoes.

### *Electricity*

The Siam Electric Company has had a notably successful career under a highly cosmopolitan backing and management. In 1892 the original Danish concession was taken over by the Government. When this arrangement proved unsatisfactory, it was handed over to an American engineer, who formed a syndicate of local merchants to carry it on. The twenty-year contract given by the Government contained such monopolistic terms as are only to be found in the early period of a country's development. At that time the capital, predominantly American and British, was £6,000; it was later increased to £50,000.

By 1912 the original shareholders, who had received their capital back four times in bonuses and dividends, sold their stock. As the years passed the Siam Electric Company continued to be profitable; in 1930 it not only paid a 9 per cent dividend but also contributed Tcs. 50,000 towards the Menam Memorial Bridge. Both this station and the government station at Samsen used paddy husk fuel, whereas the dozen small provincial plants were Diesel-powered. In 1934 municipal stations were established. Just before the revolution Puket was endowed with electricity at a cost of Tcs. 200,000, but the post-revolution efforts were cheaper. The expenditure on providing electricity for Chandaburi, Prachin, and Ban Pang did not exceed Tcs. 30,000 apiece, the money being derived from loans granted by the Government to the municipalities. But the total of township plants is still under a score, and kerosene remains the chief means of provincial illumination.

In 1939 the Government announced its intention of opening a hydroelectric station at Kanchanaburi, and at about the same time it ordered a reduction in the regular rates for electric current.

### TIN MINING

The agricultural Siamese have never been interested in exploiting their mineral wealth except in the form of gold and jewels; until very recently they have been content to leave such work

wholly to foreigners. From the earliest times tin was extracted by foreigners and shipped to Sumatra, the principal production center being Takuapa province. The system of extraction by pits was the same for both Malaya and Siam, but only the west coast mines were worked. In 1603, however, the Dutch established factories on the east coast at Pattani and Nakon Sritemmerat for the purchase and smelting of tin ore; and they were followed seven years later by Englishmen, who erected their own smelting works at Pattani, only to abandon them in 1624. During the reign of Phra Narai a French company erected a factory at Puket, which held a tin monopoly under royal warrant. Tin was always recognized as a vital commodity and was included in the gifts conveyed periodically to the Chinese Court, but its extraction was always in foreign hands.

Now, however, the Siamese Government is determined to exploit its own tin resources. At first government intervention in this foreign-run industry was purely negative; only recently has it become aggressive.

### *Technique*

Traces of Chinese activity have been found in all modern mines, and Chinese coolies continue to furnish the only good and abundant labor supply. Until recently the Chinese also furnished the capital; and they still own, or are shareholders in, many mining enterprises, to the success of which their magnificent villas and tombs in the peninsula testify. One Chinese family even acquired control over an entire province.<sup>7</sup>

The Chinese mine-owner continues to operate according to methods different from those of the European. He prefers hiring cheap labor to buying costly machinery. Moreover, in remote areas, wages return to the proprietor through the medium of the shops and opium dens owned and run by him. Although mortality is high, these Chinese owners manage to avoid taking many of the safety precautions endorsed by European miners. Most of their coolies have no chance to better themselves, and only a few of them resist opium and other temptations to spend their savings. In these ways the Chinese mine-owner can keep operating his mines when falling prices make it no longer profitable to the Euro-

pean, and this explains the general Chinese resistance to any restriction measures.<sup>8</sup>

As a rule, European miners do not hire a mass of coolies. In spite of the high initial investment, dredging machinery is so effective for the usual alluvial deposit, and operating costs are so low, that it often pays to re-work areas already mined by primitive Chinese methods. Although a dredge costs from £70,000 to £120,000, 57 per cent of the total production in 1931 was done by bucket dredging; and nowadays 100 such machines are hauling from 30,000 to 40,000 tons of ore a year.

In 1907 bucket dredging was introduced so successfully by the Australian Tongkah Harbor Tin Dredging Company that other companies quickly bought dredges. When the Ronpibun district became the center of another feverish "Kinta Valley" exploitation in 1916, modern methods were introduced there to replace the long-used Chinese open cast system. In spite of the setback given by the war, the Renong Company was operating two dredges by 1921; the Siamese Tin Syndicate, three; the Rattrut Basin Dredging Company, one; and in the province of Takuapa the East Asiatic Company had introduced an electrically driven dredge on the Pong River. Though their output was steadily increasing, the eastern provinces, with only one dredge operating in all Nakon Sritemmerat Circle, were still far behind.

There was plenty of water in the peninsular mountains to operate the suction pumps that eliminated wastage; the sluice in which the tin ore was usually washed out was a marvel of Chinese bamboo construction. But while the heavier ore was retained at the bottom of the sluice, the rest of the water, gravel, and ore was piled up in enormous heaps that endangered the rice fields and the flow of the rivers. This situation induced the Government to order the construction of basins wherever sedimentation took place.

A little later the problem of communications again caused the Government to interfere. Work was ordered to be stopped in Puket harbor, where the stanniferous layer extending into the sea had long been worked by the Chinese. The result was a silting up of the channel, which made it inaccessible in low water. Almost at once the Tongkah Dredging Company applied to the Government for a concession to dredge the whole harbor, in return for which it

promised a build a dock and channel leading from it into deep water. This led in turn to more applications to dredge the bays of the neighboring islands although the main run of tin went straight out from Puket. Not to be outdone by its concessionaires, the Government also put its own boring crews to work on the island.

The mines with hydraulic equipment are chiefly in the hands of English or Australians. The latter are hard workers and have received training in their own gold mines; they are not dissatisfied with primitive conditions and upon occasion are not averse to doing manual labor themselves.<sup>9</sup> They are also on excellent terms with their Chinese coolies, and for all these reasons Australian engineers receive proportionately higher pay than the Europeans doing business in Bangkok. Because the Australian companies had pioneered the dredging industry in Siam, they were permitted temporarily, during the depression, to cease operations without prejudice to their titles—a privilege that was refused the British. This was but one of the inconsistencies in policy that the highly personal absolute monarchy permitted itself.

All Siamese tin ore is transported for smelting to the big foundries of the Straits Trading Company and the Eastern Smelting Company of Singapore and Penang. The latter is supplied from the west coast mines, and the former from both coasts. Some decades ago a number of small Chinese foundries existed in Siam; but they were forced out by the British smelting companies, which at present have long-term contracts with the mines. Naturally the Siamese Government would like to get its hands on some of the profits now accruing to the Malayan smelters; and there is much speculation as to whether a Siamese smelting industry would pay, especially if financed by the Japanese. Credner thinks that a Siamese foundry would pay if it were located on the west coast and if all the Siamese ores were taken to it.

However, the whole situation may be entirely changed as a result of the discovery of a new process announced by the Siamese Tin Mines Ltd. when they opened a new plant in October 1939. The introduction of this process will mean that costs will be reduced to well under £100 per ton and that actual metallic tin will be produced instead of concentrates needing subsequent smelting.

*Mining Legislation*

Although by tradition and law all minerals in Siam belong to the Crown, for many years mining lands and leases were easily acquired. Local governors arrogated to themselves full power in such matters, and the miners were allowed to draw their own boundary lines. Whenever disputes arose, the strongest of the contestants won. Foreigners received permits to prospect as part of the baggage of extraterritoriality, but it was generally accepted that Bangkok's concession to a mining lease in the peninsula was hard to get and only possible after the local raja had given his expensive consent. After the lease was obtained, the miners' troubles were over as they enjoyed almost complete freedom in extracting ore, the only condition being that they had to pay one picul of tin for every three *bhars* exported. Before the establishment of the Department of Mines in 1891 about thirteen mining leases had been granted to subjects of the treaty powers, and their issue was in the hands of the Foreign Office.

Although this state of affairs had long been recognized as unsatisfactory, it was not until the Government decided, in the late nineteenth century, upon a policy of controlled exploitation of Siam's mineral wealth that the first steps were taken to remedy it. The Foreign Office had neither adequate technical knowledge, nor sufficient acquaintance with local conditions, nor indeed any control over distant provincial Governors. With the establishment of the Department of Mines, European experts were hired by the Government to explore the country's mineral wealth.

The few big concessions that existed covered hundreds of square miles. On most of them no rents had been paid and no work done; they had been granted principally to professional concession hunters, whose sole concern was to sell their leases as quickly and as profitably as possible. These concessions were totally non-productive; their rent was nominal, and the Government had to be content with a purely theoretical royalty on minerals that were never mined.

Since the leases contained no clause requiring that steady work be done, they could be held indefinitely at small expense, thus tying up huge areas to the detriment both of the Government and of



serious entrepreneurs. Many Europeans, on finding lead or copper ore, applied at once for a mining lease, simply to keep potential rivals out. In time the Department of Mines was able to regulate the matter through laws passed in 1901, and amplified in 1919, by which old and new leases were reconsidered on the basis of a very incomplete topographical survey and the records of land deeds.

The old leases were successively abrogated, and under the new terms fair rent and steady operation were assured. The size of the areas granted was cut down to a few hundred acres apiece, according to the nature of the deposit. A fee of Tcs. 40 was charged for the right to prospect in any one province for a year, and this right could be renewed as often as desired. For double the normal fee the exclusive right to prospect could be reserved over a certain area of ground. The number of blocks ceded was not limited, provided the concessionaires gave reasonable assurance of being able to work all of them. If they failed to do so, their leases reverted to the Government.

When this law was promulgated, there was a general outcry that treaty rights had been violated; but mining men admitted certain advantages. Almost immediately there followed a wave of interest in mining as the idea still prevailed among foreigners that Siam could play a leading rôle among Far Eastern nations in producing gold and precious stones. In the majority of cases the extravagance, inexperience, and mismanagement of the different companies were matched by a lack of serious interest on the part of the investors, who regarded mining as a side issue in which small amounts of capital could be invested on a speculative basis. Mining was treated as a gamble, and nothing was done to insure good management.

There is no evidence that any of the local syndicates ever tested an area properly. If they had done so, they would never have paid such high prices for small, inaccessible native holdings or have wasted so much time negotiating and making good a complete title. Only after this was accomplished did the real work begin, and this included the very important item of road-building.

In this respect miners in Siam were and still are seriously handicapped as compared with their competitors in the Malay States. For years Bangkok's control over these distant provinces was

purely nominal; state-provided means of communication were lacking; and the companies had to provide their own repair shops and pay a larger royalty on output and higher transportation charges to the refineries than their Malayan competitors. Finally there were and still are innumerable legal obstacles in the form of red tape, licenses, and permits.

### *Rise of Government Control*

Until the depression the State was content not to participate actively in the tin industry but merely to tax the output for revenue. In addition to collecting license fees and a 5 per cent tariff on imported machinery, the Government levies a royalty on exported ore. This is based on a sliding scale, with a maximum of 25 per cent and a minimum of 10 per cent, calculated on the price in the Singapore market. It is also affected by the exchange value of the tical, as was found in 1931 when Siam decided to remain on the gold standard. With costs being paid in ticals and tin realizable only in depreciated Straits dollars, it was feared that many Siamese mines would have to close down. But the situation was saved by the restriction measures and the resulting rise in the price of tin, and Siamese companies have continued to declare dividends of about 15 per cent.

In 1895 Siam's tin industry was stagnant or even declining slightly, but in the early twentieth century it began to forge steadily ahead. However, it received such a setback during the post-war depression that *The Record* for October 1921 gloomily prophesied that the current state of the tin market threatened the local industry with extinction. However, despite the considerable use of substitutes for tin during the war, ore was still essential for more than half of tin manufactures; and from 1925 to 1929 the Siamese Government realized a yearly average of Tcs. 3,500,000 in royalties on its tin exports.<sup>10</sup> Prospecting and mining at this time covered an area about 145,000 acres.

In the pre-depression era about sixty companies were registered in Siam, of which only thirty—most of them under British management—were of much importance. In addition to the registered companies there were numerous small concerns run by the Chinese and a few by Siamese. Collectively these small holders represented

the larger portion of the country's mining community, and mining on the east coast was almost wholly on a small scale.

These small miners with limited capital were compelled to sell their ore to a syndicate or to the smelters' agents.<sup>11</sup> Though the miners in this way got ready cash with which to pay their coolies and to buy provisions, the price they received had to allow sufficient margin for the buyer to cover a possible price decline in the always uncertain tin market, as well as interest on his outlay. Miners with large capital could afford to stock their tin until the price was high enough to induce them to sell. The smelters, for their part, tried to amass as large stocks as possible to keep their furnaces running continuously. They therefore kept agents in the various tin mining centers who were willing to buy up all ore at the market price. In addition to these agents there were also middlemen who kept stocks so as to take their profits as the opportunity arose. The principal buyers were the Straits Trading Company and the Eastern Smelting Company.

The need felt by the miners to protect their common interests was shown by the formation of the Siam Chamber of Mines in 1928. It was composed of twenty-five companies, all of them European, representing a paid-up capital of Tcs. 50,000,000. Although this Chamber has flourished financially, it has been representative neither of the mining industry nor of government policy. In 1931 four prominent Chinese miners were asked to join; but no further attempt was made to broaden the membership until 1937, when seats on the Council were provided for Siamese miners. The Government still regards the Chamber as a body of foreigners, whose advice is neither sought nor welcomed.

As in so many other fields, the depression forced a change in the Government's mining policy. In 1930 changes were made in mining regulations as a result of the drop in the price of tin. No further applications for mining leases or prospecting permits were to be granted except under special circumstances. By preventing the working of new areas it was vainly hoped that a restriction in output would be effected.

This Act was the sequel to the Government's suspension of royalty fees and was taken to denote increased official interest in the industry's welfare. Characteristically this increased interest

was arbitrary and paternalistic; in the spring of 1931 the Government took no notice of the petition of seventeen companies and the resolution of the Chamber of Mines asking that no restriction be put on Siam's tin output. Early in July 1931 European newspapers announced that Siam had joined the International Tin Restriction Agreement with a quota of 10,000 tons. For more than two weeks after this announcement the Government did not trouble to make known in Siam even the simplest facts regarding this important agreement. It did not seem necessary to give notice to the miners and buyers about production and stocks in hand although their cooperation was essential if the scheme was to be made a success.

Before 1925 world tin consumption and production were more or less balanced. Then came the post-war boom, and the demand soon outran the supply. This was followed by intensive exploitation, with the result that tin production increased at a fantastic rate. By 1929 world production had risen to 186,986 tons, or 8,958 tons in excess of consumption.

In 1913 Siam's production of tin was 6,660 tons; in 1917, 9,153 tons; and in 1923, 6,334 tons. In 1930, when the slump began, Siam's output was 11,060 tons; and in 1931 it rose to 12,447 tons, with the price at £118 a ton. In 1932, after voluntary restriction had been tried and found wanting, international restriction was introduced. Only four governments were included in the original agreement—Nigeria, Bolivia, the Netherlands Indies, and Malaya. Siam was invited to restrict her output, not as a signatory power but as a participating government.

Despite the opposition of both European and Chinese miners, the Government was persuaded to sign the agreement. Siam's dependence on Malayan smelters, who were naturally anxious to have her restrict her output, was delicately pointed out. Ten thousand tons, it was said, was a generous allowance, considering that Siam's output—based on very inaccurate export figures—was about 13,000 tons a year. Malaya did not fear Siamese competition although Siam's possibilities as a producer were really untapped; but she feared that smuggling across the Siamese frontier would neutralize her own restriction measures.

The immediate benefits of the restriction scheme were such

that for the first years its detractors were silenced. The price of tin rose from £140 at the end of 1932 to £220 in 1933, and the value of tin shares rose 133 per cent. The high price and international control made possible the creation of a research and development fund to investigate further uses for tin. When the 1931 agreement expired in January 1934, Siam agreed to continue on the basis of the previous quota, which was now subject to proportional increase when the permissible exports of the four signatory powers should reach 65 per cent of their standard tonnage. Four months later the International Committee recommended as part of the restriction scheme that a buffer pool should be accepted without delay because of the rapid expansion of the tin industry in areas where production was not restricted; and six months after that the committee cancelled the latest increase in production quotas so as to maintain the price of tin at the high figure of £230 a ton.

Aside from the clouds gathering generally on the international horizon, Siamese tin companies were facing local problems of their own. Discussion of the Restriction Act in the Assembly in February and March 1934 took a decidedly nationalist turn. The Government's proposal to increase the royalty on tin in order to supplement its declining revenues in the same way that the Federated Malay States had done aroused a storm of protest. It was pointed out that there was no analogy between the two countries since the Federated Malay States gave every facility to its miners, whereas miners in Siam were handicapped by higher charges of all kinds, which raised production costs by about 30 per cent. If the Government persisted in its policy, it was said, 10,000 laborers would suffer pay cuts.

In September 1934 the problem of aliens' versus squatters' rights in the tin areas was brought up in the Assembly. About 304 applications for mining concessions had been received since restriction was imposed, and these latest concessionaires had received no quotas. It was held that, in the next quota period, poor people in the agricultural off-season should be allowed to pan tin with smaller fees and fewer formalities. The Government was accused of helping capitalists, especially foreigners, to bully the people. In March 1935 the Assembly carried the discussion a step further when it was suggested that the Government should carry on min-

ing operations of its own. The Government replied that it had no such intention and emphatically denied the suggestion that it was considering expropriating private property without compensation.

It was the growth of such a nationalistic attitude that aroused the ire of the Malayan press, which was still further incensed when Siam began to be recalcitrant about renewing the restriction agreement. The Siamese tin industry, it was said, owed everything to British capital and brains; and it was a shortsighted policy to impose an impossible tax burden upon it. It would be fairer to prohibit the entry of foreign capital altogether than to tax it out of existence once it had been invested in the country.

Although tin prices remained high, tin shares began a steady uninterrupted decline throughout 1934-35, despite the renewal of restriction measures. This seemed to cause the committee no alarm; hints were thrown out that a lower price would be safer since the demand was inelastic and the recent development of electrolytic tinning was reducing the quantity of tin used per ton. Since working costs had been greatly reduced since 1929, the pre-restriction year, it was unlikely that a further reduction in costs could be made. Local nationalism added force to the general misgivings about so high a price level when the restriction agreement came up for renewal in 1936. The output of the restricting countries had declined from 92.2 per cent of capacity in 1931 to 82 per cent in 1934; and during the same period a decline of 8 per cent in world tin consumption had been accompanied by substantial increases in nickel, copper, and lead output. The chairman of the International Committee attributed the doubling of tin prices to the operation of the official buffer pool, supplemented by a private pool. In March 1935 it was decided to increase by 40 to 45 per cent the standard tonnage of the restricting countries, and a further rise in the quotas allotted seemed inevitable.

Obviously the tin market was suffering from a lack of confidence. A bitter struggle was beginning between the International Committee and the London Metal Exchange. In June, owing to the scarcity of metal available, the price of tin rose rapidly and continued to soar throughout July, which increased criticism of the committee's policy. So marked was the scarcity in tin supplies that

the committee had to make three increases in the basic quotas between August and December 1935. This shortage continued into 1936; at first it was attributed to heavy Russian purchases, and later to the inability of Bolivia to produce her full quota.

Among all the critical voices raised to demand an increased quota, Siam's was the strongest, to the intense irritation of all the signatory countries, especially Malaya. It was pointed out that, of all the restricting areas, only in Siam had any company increased its earnings since 1929, and that this had led to definite improvements in economic conditions in Phuket and Singora provinces. Malayan newspapers continued to attribute the steady fall in tin prices to Siam's unreasonable demands and to reiterate that Siam was really not restricting her output at all. Siam, on the other hand, complained that she was forced to limit production to 54.6 per cent of her capacity, which she put at 18,759 tons—the figure on which she would insist as the price of a renewal of restriction. Since Siam's exports had almost doubled in the period 1929–34, it was obvious that she favored restriction; but she was determined to take advantage of her strong strategic position to get a larger quota.

The negotiations, which lasted throughout half of 1936, were prolonged, complicated, and acrimonious. Chinese and Siamese mine-owners and laborers were to a man in favor of unrestricted production. Malaya felt that she should produce 70,000 tons of the current world output of 180,000 tons; and she sent two delegates, both representatives of the International Committee, to offer Siam a quota of 15,700 tons. During the following months, while Siam was capitalizing on her nuisance value, the price of tin fell to well under £200 a ton.

In July Siam rejected Malaya's offer, and both delegates left Bangkok saying that they would reopen negotiations only at Siam's request. On August 6 the Siamese Government issued a communiqué saying that it accepted restriction in principle, and ten days later it sent the foreign adviser to the Department of Mines to London. During all this period the newspapers of Singapore and Bangkok were given over to the tin dispute, but no one seemed to know exactly what Siam had been offered or what her counter-proposals had been. The Siamese Government could afford to play for

time. In her tin industry the laborers were almost all Chinese, and the owners either Chinese or British; the Government took only a small share of their profits, and the Siamese people directly obtained nothing at all. Siam's representatives openly doubted whether the indirect benefits would compensate for the dissipation of such valuable resources. Exporting tin was likened to living off the country's capital, gaining nothing and losing irreplaceable assets.

The advocates of the largest obtainable quota did not realize that restriction of output was a way of conserving natural resources, and that the demand for tin and consequently its price was bound to grow with the expansion of world industry. The possibility of discovering substitutes for tin had to be balanced against the possibility of discovering new uses for it. The most far-sighted of Siam's statesmen wanted to retard exploitation of the country's tin until the Siamese themselves were in a position to benefit directly from it. After three more months of negotiations an agreement was finally reached in which Siam was granted a standard quota for five years of 18,500 tons—just a few hundred tons less than the figure she had held out for—which meant a minimum production of 60 per cent. The price of tin jumped at the news, and even Malaya appeared satisfied since the world's rearmament promised an increasing consumption of tin. But two factors—one external and the other internal—soon detracted from Siam's triumph. Her production capacity proved to be smaller than she had thought, and the price of tin fell abruptly in 1937 and 1938.

At first, as with the original restriction scheme, all went very well. China was the only important producing country left out; and Malaya, as the largest single producing country, was satisfied with being given virtual control of operations. One result was that the committee's policy was much less criticized than formerly, and there were fewer complaints that the consumers' interests were being sacrificed to those of the producers. For the first half of 1937 the profits of Siam's tin companies almost equalled their yearly average for 1935 and 1936. Although the value of tin exports rose above that of the preceding year, Siam's new quota remained under-produced by about 3,800 tons; thus in reality Siam was not restricting her production at all.

However, there was grave dissatisfaction with the way in which



quotas were allotted. On the basis of the fact that all minerals are state property, the Government reserved to itself an enormous proportion of the quota, 70 per cent, which meant that only 7,107 tons were available to producers. In addition to this considerable reservation, the Government also held the right to transfer its percentage to producers at will. During the previous quota period ugly rumors had circulated that substantial blocks of the State's reserved share were being allotted to various government departments, which had sold them in parcels of various dimensions to the highest bidders.<sup>12</sup>

Legally impeccable, this type of transaction was naturally resented by producers, whose quota had been cut down unfairly and unnecessarily in favor of the few among them who were able to secure the transfer of state quotas through hiring an intermediary on a commission basis. Regulations do exist whereby in theory a producer can get an increase in his quota if he can prove that he has already produced his allotment, but miners complain that red tape makes this impracticable.

The year 1937 witnessed the most violent fluctuation in tin prices, which rose to £311 a ton, only to fall at the end of the year to £183. Prices continued to fall in the early months of 1938. Malaya, long dissatisfied with the distribution of standard tonnages, was granted, together with the Netherlands Indies, a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent increase. The buffer pool scheme again came up for consideration and found the experts as divided as usual.

The restriction scheme once more showed that it was unable to retrieve the fall in prices quickly enough. The buffer scheme, representing from 10,000 to 15,000 ton stocks, did not aspire to fix prices, but rather to stabilize violent fluctuations and to maintain the price between £200 and £330 a ton. Siam held aloof when the other signatory powers agreed to this scheme after it was approved by the committee in June 1938. Finally in November, feeling that she had nothing to lose and that it might help solve her unemployment problem, Siam joined the pool, by which she was entitled to contribute an additional 468 tons each quarter.

In the spring of 1939 the uncertainty of the tin market continued, but in March the Siamese producers finally announced themselves satisfied with Siam's increased quota. Prospects were

regarded as moderately bright, though no new large-scale operations were envisaged.

## TEAK

Whereas most forest produce, such as bamboo and tree oil, has always been free to the people, teak exploitation was for centuries the main source of income for the Lao princes—although the industry was actually in Chinese hands. Until the second half of the nineteenth century its use was limited to the decoration of temples and palaces. None was exported, as India had her own timber and China had developed a style of architecture that required little wood. However, when the exploitation of the teak forests was taken over by Occidentals at the end of the nineteenth century, teak became an important item of export to industrial Europe.

For many years the teak industry remained under Asiatic control, even after it was reorganized as the result of Britain's conquest of Upper Burma in the 1880's. The Burmese who had been in the timber business there then obtained concessions from the neighboring Lao princes. These proved so fertile a source both of income and of dispute that the British and the Siamese Government felt constrained to intervene. A new era began in 1896 when the Siamese appointed H. Slade, an expert from the Indian Forestry Department, to organize the industry and to train Siamese in a Forestry School. The following year a new type of lease was adopted revising the minimum requirements that were to be generally applied during the following decade when almost all the old leases expired.

By successive laws the State became owner of the forests; and their hereditary owners, the Lao chieftains, were compensated for their dispossession by an increase of 25 per cent in their revenues from timber. Although the Government intended to control the industry, foreign capital was needed, and to some extent foreign labor. The number of concessions at this time came to about a hundred and were held by Burmese, Europeans, Chinese, and Siamese, whose scattered and often small holdings made exploitation uneconomic and supervision very difficult. The high costs involved in the original investment, in addition to the price of labor, auto-

matically eliminated many of them; and still more were discouraged by the new type of lease officially adopted in 1897. This required that concessionaries must have enough capital to tide them over a long period when market prices might fluctuate wildly; that the entire area conceded must be worked; that transportation must be provided in inaccessible areas; and finally that suitable housing must be erected for overseers and elephant drivers.

Some of the Lao princes still hold leases; but most of them have come into the hands of about forty concessionaries, of which the most important are six European companies—four British, one Danish, and one French. These companies are the Bombay-Burma Corporation, the Borneo Company, the Anglo-Siam Corporation, the L. T. Leonowens Company, the Danish East Asiatic Company, and La Compagnie Est Asiatique Française. The chief Chinese firms are the Lam Sam and the Khun Chamrong Chinarak Companies. It is impossible to get accurate statistics about foreign investments in Siam, but fifteen years ago it was estimated that the capital represented by these European teak companies amounted to about £3,000,000.<sup>13</sup> In 1936 about 88 per cent of the industry was in foreign hands; 5 per cent under government control; and 7 per cent owned by individual Siamese.<sup>14</sup>

### *Technique*

Government regulations in 1897, 1913, and 1922 protected the teak forests by increasing technical restrictions. A minimum size for trees felled was prescribed to conserve the existing numbers and to guarantee reproduction. Felling is done during the rainy season so as not to splinter the wood on the hard ground. The laborers who prepare the trees for felling are mostly Khamus from Indo-China. The first process involves the selection of trees, which was formerly done by the lessees but now by government officials, who mark them by number. The bark is then removed in a broad belt two feet above the ground; and incisions are made into the tree, which cause it to dry to death. About two years after girdling, the tree is felled; and by then it is dry enough to float down the river.

After the trees are felled, they are sawn into logs of fifteen to thirty feet in length, on which identification marks are placed.

The logs are then drawn by elephants along wet graded roads to the waterways and piled up along the banks, where they await high water. These herds of working elephants represent a large investment. They cost from between Tcs. 4,000 and Tcs. 5,000 apiece, and the total number used in the teak industry is about 4,000.

Recently narrow-gauge railroads have been built, but they are useful only in very large concessions; for the most part the work is still done by elephants, or, during the hot season, by buffalo carts. The work is so hard and skilled that elephant drivers receive enough pay to afford a second wife. They are mostly Lao and Siamese, as are also the lumberjacks who float the logs down to Bangkok.

Logs are floated from June to October, and every day of the high water has to be utilized because of the uncertain variation in its level. In the plains, dams are built to store up the water until the rains can furnish the necessary impetus. Rafts are constructed after the rapids have been passed; until then the logs must float singly, with the assistance of men and elephants stationed at regular intervals along the banks. Many of the larger creeks have deteriorated during the past thirty or forty years as a result of the constant passage of vast quantities of logs, which have worn away their banks. In this way the creeks have become broader and shallower and sometimes are so altered that the logs have to be taken out and carried to the main rivers. Each camp develops its own methods of transport according to the various local topographical problems.

Two further hazards await the logs on their way downstream—fire and theft. Every year widespread fires occur in the teak forests, and the rivers are divided into sections to insure the essential fire control. For years timber-stealing has been widely prevalent, especially in the Sukhothai district, where the extensive canal system favors this form of crime. In 1897 a law forbade the defacing of the property marks put on logs; but little could be done to prevent all sorts of devices being used to disguise logs of disputed ownership, which at that time were lying about all over the country. Once, in 1914, when the Government, in cooperation with the teak companies, was trying to stamp out timber theft,

the thieves in reprisal burned over 1,000 logs in the Me-Yome district. Teak companies still complain that they lose 50 per cent of their logs through theft and that the Siamese law of evidence is such that nothing effective can be done to prevent it.

When they reach the plateaux on the edge of the Menam plain, the logs are tied together in floats of 200 to 400. At the different control stations along the way logs can be sold to buyers, who must pay the tax that is normally collected downstream at Paknampoh, where the logs are measured by state officials for royalty. The collection of royalty at Paknampoh is generally confined to foreign firms of large capital and long standing. Siamese merchants usually pay royalty in their respective *changvads* before the logs are made up into rafts and floated downstream. All the logs are brought to the river at the same time; and there are too few officials to measure and stamp them and collect the royalty in the jungle, where it should logically be done. The Government has to be careful that the logs are not sold surreptitiously before reaching Paknampoh. There the less desirable logs are sold on the spot to local dealers, who supply the up-country markets; and those that remain, still in raft formation, go to storage anchorage fifteen to forty miles north of Bangkok, where they are moored to the banks by stakes driven into the river. Here again they require protection both from river thieves and from a small mollusc, the toredo, that rapaciously attacks timber in water.

### *Government Policy*

When the Lao princes still controlled the teak industry, the Siamese Government was supposed to get 50 per cent of the license fees due these princes; but haphazard collection reduced the State's share to virtually nothing. This was certainly one of the factors that induced the Government to acquire control of the teak leases. The result was that in the pre-depression decade the license fees collected at Paknampoh alone averaged about Tcs. 2,000,000 a year.

From 1897 to 1908, when the teak leases were first issued by the Government, the royalty was increased; and it was further increased in 1925 when the next batch of leases was granted. In general the royalty rates on first class logs were raised by a total

of 20 per cent, but there are various rates of royalty. The old law permitted individuals to cut four trees—hardly enough for a house—for domestic use, bridges, temples, or public rest houses, free of charge. The amount annually taken for these purposes was so mysteriously large that the Government felt it must stop the leakage. To prevent such abuse, a new law was passed providing that ten years must elapse before a new application could be made; and such applications were granted only by those living within a certain distance of the forests.

In spite of the importance of teak as a source of revenue, the Government has not been sufficiently interested in promoting technical and scientific progress. Numbers of trees have not been preserved from extinction; too few forest officers have been trained; and too little research has been done in extracting valuable properties from the wood. The teak forests have long been overworked, and the Survey Department has left the whole forest area virtually untouched.

Between 1897 and 1926, the year in which the market collapsed, government profits from both foreign and Siamese firms averaged a million ticals a year. But too much of the revenue from forest royalties has been absorbed by the general expenses of state, and less than 20 per cent has been used by the Forestry Department itself.<sup>15</sup> Excessive felling has reduced the productive capacity of the second most important teak resources in the world by 50 per cent. The only step taken by the Government, apart from lease revisions, has been the purchase of Diesel engines for the longest railroad pulls for the purpose of saving the forests from total destruction through their use as fuel.

Because the Government's royalty is fixed and assured during the period of lease, the official viewpoint necessarily differs from that of the producers. Teak firms, being few in number, highly localized, and usually involved in other interests, have felt no need to establish international restriction, or even any form of sales propaganda until recently. However, international politics, in addition to important fluctuations in the world teak market, have now altered the attitude of both the Government and the foreign firms.

In July 1936 the vernacular paper *Pramuan Wan* created a sensation by printing a statement to the effect that, when the

leases came up for renewal in 1940, the Forestry Department proposed to take over 40 per cent of the forests, leaving 40 per cent to be divided between foreign firms and individuals; the remaining 20 per cent would be broken up into small areas to encourage Siamese to engage in the industry. In addition to existing royalties, separate fees would be charged on all but the small areas worked by the Siamese. The paper printed figures to show that the government forests—then 5 per cent of the whole—yielded better revenues than the royalty received from foreign firms. Under the proposed plan forests would be worked continuously for fifteen years and then be allowed to stand untouched for the same length of time. This scheme would not only reduce foreign concessions by more than half but would also restrict still further the time during which the forests could be worked. In short, it would force a complete reorganization of the industry.

Other factors have arisen more permanent and serious than the State's desire to reduce foreign participation in the profits of the teak trade. The Financial Adviser's report for 1937-38 showed a progressive shrinkage under all timber headings, despite a certain recovery in export and price since the 1922 low. If the industry had really been healthy, its recovery would have been more pronounced and would have been reflected proportionately in government revenues. The most unfavorable factor is the appreciable diminution in the quality and size of the teak resulting from over-exploitation. Except for some virgin forests still left in the most inaccessible regions, progressive exploitation through short-term leases has cleared the Siamese forests of high quality timber; and this decline in size and quality has reduced royalties.

Heavy destruction of forests by fires, mainly in peasant clearings, has been taking place in the mountain districts; and its consequences are causing grave concern to irrigation experts. There is little hope of replacing trees destroyed for purposes of fuel or cultivation; and since they are important as retainers of moisture, their destruction is additionally serious. Flood intensity is thereby increased, and the dry-weather flow of the river decreased. Cultivation along the river banks is another form of deforestation that passes unnoticed. It causes widening by erosion of the main rivers and their tributaries, which are of vital importance to the rural peoples. The

continuation of road and railroad building on river banks means that the country's fresh water supply will be speeded up on its way to the sea. Deforestation in headwater areas is a comparatively modern development, but the railroad in the Menam valley has been a long-standing and greater cause of damage to the central plain. All of the too few bridge openings have been so strengthened that the river cannot break through to enlarge its bed.

It is essential that the Government should restrain the hill people from this reckless destruction of forest resources, not simply by driving them out of the wooded regions but by educating them in improved agricultural technique; and this was essentially the goal of the Forestry Act passed in 1939. As to the other maladies that afflict the teak industry, the Government must change its policy fundamentally in cooperation with the foreign companies. Even the most ardent nationalists recognize that the lack of capital and technical knowledge in Siam prevents her from nationalizing the teak industry; foreign participation can be cut down but not eliminated. If over-exploitation has characterized the foreign teak industry in Siam, the Siamese Government itself has not been without sin in regarding an important natural resource purely from the fiscal viewpoint. Between 1927 and 1938 the Government took over 67 per cent of their gross profits from the six leading companies.<sup>16</sup>

At the end of 1939 the question of teak leases was still largely unsettled, though the Anglo-Siam Company signed a fifteen-year lease in October, which was pronounced to be on better terms than had originally been expected. In December the Premier stated that he was trying to benefit the Siamese by conceding smaller concessions to aliens; and that same month, and again in March 1940, the Government purchased altogether three sawmills.

### *Teak Trade*

Teak is the finest hard wood in the world; and in addition to its utility in many industries, it has great natural beauty. Siamese teak equals that of Burma in quality and exceeds that of Indo-China in quantity, but it enjoys no protected home market as does the teak of those two colonies. It was an American who first perceived the possibilities of the international teak trade.<sup>17</sup> About



1860, when the Borneo Company first placed agents in the north, the political situation was one of almost impenetrable confusion; and not until the Siamese Government assumed control was the teak trade regularized.

### *International Market*

In addition to the logs sold off at the control stations on the way down to Paknampoh, 37 per cent of those arriving at the government royalty depot are used in the country; and there is a tendency for an increasing proportion to be reserved for home consumption. The buyers are middlemen from Bangkok and the intermediary towns, who find it cheaper to purchase at Paknampoh than in the capital and then float the logs downstream themselves.

The extracting firms sell mainly to the larger sawmills in Bangkok since teak is sold for cash and the smaller sawmills are apparently unable to finance their business without credit. This credit is provided by Malay middlemen, who resell the timber to the local sawmills, which are hand-operated, chiefly by Chinese. These smaller mills generally cut logs into sizes suitable for home consumption, whereas the larger mills produce primarily for export.

Because of the wood's irregular shape and uneven quality, the milling of teak is different from that of trees of more regular growth. Skill and experience are required to select the most suitable of the many uses to which the individual log can be put and to cut accordingly. Bangkok mills, for the most part, are designed to convert logs into squares since the most important buyers are ship-builders and railroad companies, which prefer them in this form. Since the chief teak-millers in Bangkok are shippers as well, their main objective is to cut as many and as large squares as possible. This system involves the payment of freight charges on a certain amount of timber that will eventually be cut to waste, but damage in transit is thereby avoided. They have machinery for making the irregular pieces into planks and scantlings, and the rest is easily sold as firewood or roofing shingles; the ultimate wastage is thereby reduced to a minimum. There are no fixed standards for grading timber; each exporter has his own, and he is mindful of the fact that the European market demands teak of the highest

quality. Consideration is also given to the requirements of Japan, where teak is valued for the decorative quality of the natural grain.

Before 1914 whole cargoes of teak were not infrequently shipped from Bangkok to European markets; but in the post-war period, until recently, only a small percentage went to Europe, and then as only part of a ship's cargo. European agents in Siam sometimes deal directly with consumers, but more usually they work through brokers and buy against sales previously made by agents in Europe. On the other hand, shipments on consignment are commonly made to India, and only slightly less frequently to China and Japan. The system of selling before shipment is based on the need of expert appraisal before purchase in the absence of grading standards. The price depends on the reputation of any grade in the market.

Since 1908-09 the export of teak has dwindled steadily. In that year it amounted to 77,000 tons and ten years later it fell to 37,000. Two boom years succeeded this, but then a second decline set in. The quality of the timber followed a similar decline; and in the early 1920's the price of teak was still at its pre-war level, in spite of the advance made by other commodities. The foreign firms were still short-handed, and the European market was lifeless. It had not recovered since the war, and more economical substitutes had been found; moreover, naval armaments were at that time being reduced. Deliveries to India were often below cost because they had to compete with the duty-free Burmese teak, which also paid less freightage and enjoyed advantages from the rupee exchange. The Chinese market became the most important, but it was adversely affected by political troubles and the fall in silver; moreover, its chief demands were for an inferior grade of timber that was hardly profitable to ship elsewhere. Nevertheless, in spite of its fluctuations, the Far Eastern market seemed after the slump to offer the best future for the Siamese teak trade. In 1919, 20 per cent of the teak exports went to Europe; 62 per cent to India and Ceylon; and 16 per cent to China and Japan. In 1934 Europe took 12 per cent, India 22 per cent, and the Far Eastern markets 54 per cent.

Despite the changes in market conditions, teak remained Siam's second most important export until it was replaced by bullion

during the depression. Teak was slow to follow the downward trend, but equally slow to recover. Although production was reduced, the teak market kept up remarkably well until the middle of 1931; but during the next two years it rapidly deteriorated and fell 65 per cent in value.

This rapid fall was partly attributable to the Ottawa Conference, which placed a 10 per cent discriminatory duty on imports of non-Empire teak to Great Britain in addition to the 25 per cent already imposed. Competitors were adding insult to injury by propaganda favoring fashions in other materials, and in this they were ardently sustained by the insurance companies. Teak firms in Siam complained that under the fixed terms of their leases they could not adjust their production to a shifting market despite the most stringent economies. Shipments to Europe fell off 50 per cent between 1931 and 1933. Although it was obvious that the extracting firms must look to new outlets in less tariff-ridden countries, the perennial question of exchange handicapped the Far Eastern markets.

The year 1933-34 saw a slight improvement in teak prices. Although the market price was still below production cost, the increased exports of tin, teak, and rubber seemed definitely encouraging. Universal rearmament programs further improved the teak market in 1935, when for the first time in some years operations became almost profitable. This increase was more than maintained in 1936, when exports to Europe exceeded those to the Far East. Japan suddenly began to increase her purchases by as much as 30 per cent.

Before the depression the value of Siam's teak exports averaged Tcs. 7,000,000 annually. In 1932-33 they fell to Tcs. 3,300,000, and in 1935-36 they rose to Tcs. 5,000,000. The Borneo Company, the most important of the foreign firms, announced in October 1936 that its losses for the past year were £12,929 as against £29,398 for the year before. The total losses since the fall in prices set in have been formidable for all the major companies and on approximately the same scale. The heavy fall in teak prices at the end of 1937 was not checked until late in 1938, and in 1939 the downward trend continued.

The failure of the Government to announce the course it

intended to pursue when the leases expired in 1940 caused further loss to these companies. They naturally hoped that the Government would renew all the leases in view of the amount of capital they had sunk in the industry. But the Government's increasingly nationalistic policy makes it not unlikely that the foreign companies will be forced eventually to withdraw from Siam.

## FISHERIES

A growing appreciation of the commercial possibilities, as well as of the dietary importance, of an abundant and cheap fish supply for the Siamese population has added impetus to the Government's policy of economic nationalism. For years the fishermen of the Gulf and of the west coast of the peninsula have been complaining that their trade has been adversely affected by foreign rivals. Although Dr. Smith advised coming to some fishing agreement with Indo-China, it is the Japanese fishermen who have longest and most profitably frequented the Mergui archipelago and the Gulf and who have caused most of the international complications.

The Siamese navy recently built a number of boats to protect Siamese fishing rights; and since then Japanese interlopers have been more frequently caught and fined, and with them some of the Siamese who are helping them to evade the law. The Japanese use more up-to-date and cheaper devices and get a heavier catch than the Siamese. In fact, so well has the Japanese Government fostered the fishing industry that its methods are emulated all over the Orient. In 1935 the Siamese Government gave permission to a Siamese fishing company to engage thirty Japanese instructors, with the proviso that they should not be used to harm the local fishing industry in any way.

When, in the fall of 1935, the Assembly discussed the question of the reservation of Siamese fishing rights for the Siamese people, the entire Japanese Legation attended. The nationalistic Fisheries Act that was subsequently passed required three-fourths of the crew to be composed of Siamese fishermen; but it was hard to carry out. Finally, in August 1939, a bill was passed reserving fishing rights in Siamese waters to Siamese nationals.

There are but few villagers along the coasts of Siam and on the banks of the major inland rivers who derive nearly all their incomes

from fishing and allied occupations.<sup>18</sup> Most of the fishing that is done is for the consumption of the fisherman and his family. Although farming is the primary occupation, a certain income is derived from the sale of fish and from handicrafts subsidiary to fishing, such as boat-building. In villages that are given over primarily to the industry, income from fishing and allied occupations may amount to 15 or 25 per cent of the total.

Marine fisheries alone are important from the commercial viewpoint since only salted fish are exported from Siam. The annual catch is valued at about Tcs. 25,000,000 and amounts to about 41,000 tons.<sup>19</sup> These figures are admittedly underestimates and are far below what the industry could be made to produce. Despite the abundance of her fisheries, Siam imports 17,267 tons of fish a year from Indo-China and the Netherlands Indies.

The primary need of Siam's fishing industry is the adoption of modern methods of handling the catch. The quality of the fish is excellent; but the major consumption is in salted fish, the low food value of which is further undermined by poor salting methods, which spoil enormous quantities. These methods have not changed for thousands of years, and Siamese fishermen assume the attitude that no improvement in them is possible. The salt used is made from salt water, whose ingredients retard its preservative action, impart a bitter flavor to the fish, and impair its food value to the further detriment of its market price. Certain commercialized communities buy pure salt; and its additional cost—about two-thirds higher than the salt water variety—is more than compensated by the better market price and the preservation of many fish that would otherwise have spoiled.

Obsolete methods are also used in preserving the fish. Coastal steamers take on a supply of ice at Bangkok and distribute it to the fishing boats spread all over the Gulf, which in turn deliver their catch packed in this ice to the next steamer on its way back. This procedure works well for certain high-priced fish; but the great bulk of the catch consists of mackerel and herring, which have so much fat in their tissue that they cannot be properly preserved merely by contact with melting ice. Such fish, along with anchovies, could be canned after the manner of sardines; but at present the question of quality is wholly neglected. Cold storage

and artificial heat for drying could double the present business.

In July 1932 Tcs. 10,000 was granted to the Department of Fisheries for carrying out experiments in fish-canning at Langsuan and Chumporn, and for this purpose apparatus had to be imported. But this is an unnecessarily expensive way of developing a local industry. Small inexpensive canning outfits could be installed for local use, and in this way the present imports of canned fish could be cut down. The Government at the time made it clear that it had no intention of going into this trade and that the Department would simply instruct those who wished to take it up.

Although the future of Siam's fisheries lies in teaching new techniques to the younger generation, Siamese youth has shown little disposition to take up the industry. Nevertheless, it would yield almost immediate financial results and would also be of public service. Government help is the essential prerequisite to transforming a naturally abundant catch into a business infinitely more profitable than it is at the present stage of its development. A recent step in this direction was taken in 1939 when the Government renewed its attempts at fish breeding and announced its intention of founding a Fisheries School.

#### RUBBER

Siam has never enjoyed distinction for her rubber although the rubber tree will grow on almost any soil in the country where the drainage is good. In 1918 only one really important plantation existed in Siam, on the damp slopes of Chantaburi, consisting of 25,000 trees planted by some industrious Chinese. Foreign consuls, in reply to their Governments' queries, reported that it was hard to get reliable information in Bangkok about Siam's rubber output, but that it was regarded as insignificant. Her rivals enjoyed an important time advantage over Siam. Ceylon began planting in 1889, Malaya in 1895, and Siam just at the time when rubber prices began going down. Nevertheless, rubber quickly raised land values in Siam and consequently increased litigation and crime, particularly in the peninsula.

Soon after 1918 the rubber industry began to expand. The completion of Siam's southern railway favored its development in Pattani, Nakon Sritemmerat, and on the west coast. Checked by

the crash of rubber prices in 1920, the industry picked up again three years later with the restriction of production; and after 1929 it expanded rapidly.

Unlike tin mining, the rubber industry employs chiefly Siamese, although the marketing of rubber is largely carried on through Chinese middlemen. Much of the rubber is jungle-grown, especially near the Malayan frontier; and its inaccessibility is such that Bangkok officials have really no conception of the area planted. There are no recorded descriptions of the rubber areas; and to reach some of them, particularly where no roads exist, a two- or three-day journey on elephant back is required. About 75 per cent of the native holdings are planted between the paddy seasons and have been allowed to grow up with the underbrush. Such trees require fifteen years' growth before they are large enough to tap, and even then the quality is none too good.

The price fetched by Siamese rubber is always lower than that for Malayan rubber because Siam lacks scientific methods. The trees are planted too close together; parasites and weeds flourish unhindered; and there is little struggle against soil erosion. There is no adequate supervision or organization of either production or marketing, and hence no standardization.

About a third of Siam's rubber is sent to Singapore for milling, and the balance is cured in the country and exported through Penang. Malaya accounts for 53 per cent of the world's rubber production, and Siam for only 0.5 per cent. Conditions in Malaya are infinitely superior to those in Siam, where almost no roads exist except those built by plantation owners. In addition, Siam has heavy transport charges, an 8 per cent profits tax, an export tax, wage and head taxes, and duties on almost everything. The duty on latex cups alone amounts to 25 per cent.

When Siam was first approached by the Rubber Restriction Committee, she refused to join on the ground that her output was too small. In March 1934 a second invitation was sent; and this time Siam invited representatives of the two principal countries, Britain and Holland, to send experts to Bangkok. The result of the negotiations was the allotment to Siam of a basic quota of 15,000 tons a year for the 1934-38 period. At the time this seemed to foreign critics an extremely generous allowance since the year

before Siam had exported to Malaya, her chief market, only 7,765 tons. Her total acreage under rubber was then thought to be 150,000 acres—a paltry area compared with the 8,000,000 acres under rubber throughout the world. But the year 1934 was to be productive of an extraordinary evolution in Siam. A modest revival of the rubber trade, partly attributable to the rumored restriction scheme, had swelled Siam's rubber exports by August of that year to over 12,000 tons. Moreover, the political factor most unexpectedly entered into what had seemed up to then to be a purely technical problem.

On May 7, 1934, the rubber restriction agreement was signed; and the signatory Governments were asked to legislate according to the basic quotas fixed by the committee. The Siamese Assembly had adjourned on March 31 and was not scheduled to meet again until the following fall, but Siam's adherence was taken for granted. Even the State Council did not regard it as one of its more important measures, but the Assembly thought otherwise. The discussion that ensued was a remarkable illustration of the delegates' inexperience and naiveté on economic subjects. The majority who rejected restriction apparently wanted to see Siam export all the rubber she could produce, without consideration of the price that it would bring. The Assembly's attitude succeeded in overthrowing the Government, but the State Council was reconstructed on practically identical lines. The administration regarded the vote as one not of censure but simply of differing opinion.

Siamese abstention threatened the whole restriction scheme because of the unlimited opportunities for smuggling Malayan rubber into Siam. For the next six months the Assembly busily gathered data regarding the number and age of trees being tapped in Siam; the absence of a Siamese rubber planters' association, as well as of accurate statistics, was a particularly serious handicap at this time. The upshot was an increase in Siam's basic quota to 40,000 tons, which the Assembly approved in April 1935. In the third period of the quota Siam was producing 77 per cent of her full allotment.

But certain difficulties still remained, both internal and external. Restriction was still looked upon suspiciously by most native planters and Chinese middlemen, especially around Pattani. Cou-



pons, stating their production allotment, were issued to plantation owners in 1936 to be attached to the rubber sold during the quota's third period. When the whole story of their unsupervised distribution can be told, the scandal may be considered even more dramatic than the opium scandal of October 1935. The sale of these coupons gave rise to such a series of rumors throughout 1937 that they finally had to be suppressed by a strict censorship of the press. Moreover, production permits were issued to an amount considerably greater than the capacity of the older rubber estates, with the result that the newly planted areas produced almost to capacity, whereas the pioneer planters were deprived of the main advantages of the restriction scheme and placed in a precarious position.

In 1936 there was a recrudescence of that very smuggling that Siam's costly participation in the restriction scheme had been bought to prevent. In Malaya a substantial margin was being produced above the restriction quota, and it was feared this was being smuggled over the Siamese border. It was easy enough to sail along the peninsular coast and dump rubber on some lonely beach, and the frontier land between Kelantan and Siam was low-lying paddy country and very hard to patrol. The Kedah coast line was equally tempting.

In the spring of 1937 Penang passed a regulation whereby all rubber imported from Siam had to be sent via the railroad. The Kedah Government agreed to so drastic a measure because of the extreme difficulty of controlling smuggling and weight discrepancy owing to the movement of wet rubber between Siam and the colony. Since about 650 tons a month, out of the total annual imports of 32,941 tons, were transported in trucks, this regulation caused a serious upset in the vehicular traffic. Moreover, the merchandise brought back by these trucks on their return journey was an important factor in determining transport costs. Almost at once the Siamese Government retaliated by reducing the freight rates to Bangkok by 25 per cent.

By 1936 it was apparent that rubber had become one of the largest and most profitable industries in the country, being surpassed only by rice and perhaps rivalled by tin and teak. In spite of the discontent of many of the planters, Siam again adhered to

the restriction scheme. On March 14, 1938, the International Rubber Committee announced in London that negotiations with Siam had resulted in the following basic quotas, which represented an important increase over the 40,000 ton total currently in force: 1939, 54,000 tons; 1941, 55,700 tons; 1942, 56,000 tons; and 1943, 60,000 tons. The maximum area of new planting for the five-year period was set at 31,000 acres (the total area now under rubber is estimated at 312,000 acres), with additional allowances in the event of new planting by any other of the signatory countries. The restriction on imports into Malaya has not yet been seriously applied, as the statistics prove. In 1938 rubber exports totalled Tcs. 13,218,945 in value, but the value of exports shipped through Bangkok was only Tcs. 248,247. There is no regular rubber market in Bangkok, and the elimination of Penang and Singapore as marketing centers would give rise to serious complications for Siamese producers, not to mention the capital expenditure that would be necessary if rubber had to be milled in Siam before export.

An extension of rubber culture is very possible in Siam and is desired by some Occidentals there, but especially by the Japanese, to enable them to become independent of British supplies. In 1939 the Government announced its intention of building a rubber factory and of establishing centers in which to train the Siamese for this industry.

#### STATE INDUSTRIES

##### *Paper*

Paper making was formerly ranked among Siam's minor industries. By a very rudimentary process the fiber of trees growing wild was made into a coarse grey paper on which black ink or white chalk was used. The costliness as well as the superiority of imported paper caused the establishment in 1908 of a private company at Paknampoh, where there was abundant material for paper production.<sup>20</sup>

The following year important experiments were initiated in Calcutta, which after twenty-five years proved the relative practicability of various kinds of bamboo as paper material. Periodic reports were made as to its progress, and Siam surveyed the bamboo

forests along the banks of the Meklong and Kwanoi Rivers and investigated the labor and fuel problems. Finally, in 1922, the Survey Department installed modern machinery for paper making, using as a basis waste paper and rags. The old-time rough unglazed paper continued to be made from tree bark near Bangkok.

Paper turned out to be the most productive of the Survey Department's activities. It printed survey manuals and forms for sale and turned out about 300 tons of poor quality paper. At first the Ministries used to dump their old ledgers and records into the factory for repulping, until it gradually dawned on the Government that it could hardly afford to use such raw materials indefinitely.

In 1931 Phya Devahastin was credited with favoring a large-scale paper industry, for which he had selected Kanchanaburi as the region with the most suitable bamboo. Half the capital was to be raised in Siam and half abroad. Like so many other embryonic schemes of the absolute monarchy, its execution was taken over by the new Government.

Two more years of study and organization were required before the Siam Paper Company Ltd. was officially registered. In May 1934 an advertisement was placed in the local English paper stating that up to 24 per cent of the stock in this company—the first enterprise of its kind in Siam—would be on sale to foreigners. The Government would guarantee to absorb the output as Siam was then importing paper valued annually at Tcs. 1,200,000. As these imports paid 25 per cent duty, the company anticipated no difficulty in marketing its product. Of the twelve promoters, ten were officials and two were businessmen. The company was capitalized at a million ticals, of which 5,100 shares out of 10,000 were taken over by the Government. Later the Government increased its share, and the general public now holds about a fifth of the total capital. The factory's capacity was set at ten metric tons of paper daily. It is located sixty miles west of Bangkok in the most promising bamboo area, which has good water transportation to the Bangkok market.

Germany's tender for the machinery and buildings was accepted; but when the contract was signed, it turned out to be more costly than the sum subscribed. Bankers would not lend the

money, nor would the Government underwrite the needed sum unless it could take over the whole factory as a government department. In this way the State came to control 80 per cent of the stock, though it is still maintained that this was a temporary measure. When the plant is working to capacity, the profits are estimated at Tcs. 34,000, which represents about 13 per cent on the capital outlay.<sup>21</sup> It took two years to erect the factory, at a cost of Tcs. 3,000,000, including machinery. The mill prepares pulp for its own use and produces paper for printing, writing, and wrapping. The Ministry of Defense, which backed the scheme on the ground that it was supporting home products, has now turned over its management to the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

### *Silk*

Realizing that the silk industry, unlike the teak and rice industries, had failed to expand the volume of its exports since the Bowring treaties, Chulalongkorn decided that the State must take steps towards its improvement. For centuries Siam had produced raw silk and had developed a certain skill in weaving, especially in the northeastern provinces. But in 1902 the local industry was declining before the growth of foreign imports of better quality; at that time it was bringing only Straits \$60 to Straits \$120 per picul, whereas the better Japanese article fetched from Straits \$600 to Straits \$1,000. Only 1,201 piculs were exported in 1901, and Siam was importing Tcs. 30,000 worth of raw silk and 1,230,000 tons of silk goods. Since the volume of silk produced was greatest in the Korat district, the king determined to foster his improvements there, as well as in the capital.

A Sericulture Department was set up in 1902 under Professor Toyama and eight Japanese experts. Two years later a school of silk culture was set up in Bangkok's suburbs, with an area marked off for growing mulberry trees. In 1905 a branch school was established at Bangkok, and that same year Tcs. 230,000 was set aside for the silk budget.<sup>22</sup> Lectures and practical experimentation took place in the schools, and the Japanese experts toured the country teaching scientific methods of raising worms and more skilful weaving. Outstanding pupils were to be sent to Japan or France for further study.

These experiments, from which so much was expected, proved to be a dismal failure. After six or seven years Siamese silk had increased neither in quality nor quantity. Raw silk continued to be imported from Indo-China and Burma at about three times the cost of the home-grown article. Although hundreds of Siamese had received free instruction and equipment, the people were wholly indifferent to improvement and regarded the Japanese methods as unnecessarily troublesome.<sup>23</sup> The Government had to give up the whole project; and the post-war period found Siam's silk industry still declining and confined, both as to production and consumption, to the northeast. A very small amount was bought up by the Chinese and sold to Indian traders.

Spurred on by Zimmerman's and Andrews' advice, the Government determined once more to encourage this industry. In June 1937 the Ministry of Economic Affairs decided to build a silk-spinning factory, costing Tcs. 10,000, at Korat. Labor was to be supplied by the Prison Department, and the machinery was to be imported from Europe. Tenders were invited for the additional construction of a silk-worm station nearby.

### *Sugar*

Siam's plateaux and low hills edging the central plain are suited to sugar cultivation if only they can be supplied with plenty of water and with drainage facilities for eight or ten months of the year. The only area in the country that has consistently produced sugar in any quantity is Jolburi, on the eastern Gulf of Siam; but as a result of the growth of rice cultivation, the former 600 factories in this area have dwindled to 80. Until 1939, 40,000 tons of sugar were imported annually from Java at a cost of Tcs. 4,000,000.

The cultivation of cane sugar in Siam dates back indefinitely, but it was extensively planted for the first time in the eighteenth century. During the next hundred years sugar production rose rapidly to average a sugar export of between 20,000 and 30,000 piculs annually. So important had it become when Bowring came to Siam that he predicted it would grow to be the country's chief export. The climax came very soon, in 1859, when its export reached 203,596 piculs; in the next twenty years it faded away to an insignificant figure.

Though European visitors to Siam regarded sugar as the one staple article of trade, records show that its value was equivalent to only about 10 to 15 per cent of Siam's total exports. The mistaken estimate may have been due to the then current system by which European traders bartered their goods chiefly for local sugar since the rest of the local trade was almost wholly in Chinese hands. The price it fetched at this time—Tcs. 5 to Tcs. 12 per picul—was not very different from the normal price ruling in the post-war market.

During this period Siamese sugar had a fine reputation for quality. Its export extended as far as the United States, where merchants exchanged it for arms and ammunition. Production for export centered around Chandaburi and Nakon Chaisri, but it was grown generally throughout the realm for domestic consumption. The methods used were and still are very primitive. Crude sugar, or jaggery, made from the palmyra palm, forms a fourth of the sugar output, and a negligible quantity is also produced from the attap palm. The cane grown for the sugar industry is chiefly the kind known as Siamese cane, but there is a minor variety called Singapore cane.

When the export of sugar began to attract commercial attention, two attempts at improvement were made about 1867 and 1870. The first was a private venture at Sombathoribun; and the second was organized by a group called the Indo-Siam Sugar Company, to whom the Government gave 25,000 acres of land on the condition that the manufacture of sugar would be on a scale commensurate with the liberality of the concession. Siamese officials at the time told the American consul that they would make a similar concession to his nationals.<sup>24</sup> But neither of these efforts met with the anticipated success, and after 1870 there was a marked decline in sugar exports.

The main cause of this decline was the attitude of the factory owners towards the planters. As a rule the factory would buy the crop green at about Tcs. 24 a *rai*, advancing a third of that sum in cash and paying the rest when the factory had sold its sugar. The factories would not allow the cane to be cut until it suited them; and this delayed planting operations, with the result that the cane deteriorated. Two further and increasingly important causes

of the decline in this industry were the competition of Javanese sugar and the extension of rice cultivation.

Until 1914 cane cultivation was fairly constant. War needs gave it a slight impetus, notably around Cholburi, where the planting was in Chinese hands. About 1921, 3,000 *rai* were taken up near Nakon Patom for cane cultivation; but the project of building a mill and factory there never materialized. At this time all the cane grown in Siam was for local consumption and by no means met the country's requirements. Local distillers had practically given up the use of home-produced molasses in favor of the lowest grade imported from Java, which was cheaper and more regular in supply.

In the 1920's foreigners began to interest themselves in developing Siam's sugar industry. Their investigations proved that sugar, whether cane, palmyra, or coconut, could be produced commercially. A small industry was actually developing—the manufacture of sweets from both local and imported sugar. Government taxes on cane land and transit duties were high, however; and the State was naturally suspicious of granting foreign companies the virtual monopoly they asked for. The cultivators, for the most part Siamese, were also very conservative and apathetic about improving their crop.

In January 1934 it was rumored that a private enterprise to erect a modern refinery at Jolburi was under way. The chief promoter tried to publicize the idea of a national sugar industry and applied to the Government for a subsidy in order to form a company along the same lines as the paper industry. But the Government refused the 25 per cent of the shares it was offered, holding out for at least a controlling interest. For over two years the enterprise was held up while unsuccessful attempts were made to raise the necessary capital privately. Finally in November 1936 it became known that the Government had decided to finance the factory and that the site chosen was Lampang.

Judging from the decrease in the funds allotted to cotton, it seemed as if Siam was now turning to sugar in her attempt to establish crop diversification. The 1937 budget provided for the expenditure of Tcs. 1,250,000 for the new sugar industry. Two hundred acres of land were purchased, and plans were laid for

the construction of a road and railroad that would bring the cane to the factory within forty-eight hours of its being cut. To dispel the fears expressed by some Assembly members that the new silk and sugar factories would not be efficiently managed, the Government announced that it was going to run the industry on a purely commercial basis. The Czech company, Skoda, was awarded the contract to build the factory at the extraordinarily high figure of Tcs. 827,000; and Germany practically gave Siam the cranes at the cost of only Tcs. 90 apiece. Construction work began in April 1937.

The capacity of the factory was set at 500 tons a day; but the first crops were scanty and uneven and far from furnishing the necessary supply. To be a financial success, this factory must turn out at least 10,000 tons annually and be placed under experienced management. Milling must be concentrated within the 120 days of the cane season, and the rest of the year given over to refining molasses and making confectionery.

The local farmers at first resented the factory, the building of which had involved the expropriation of land; and an attempt was made to burn it down. The Government, which was trying to benefit the producer, was balked by the excessive prices demanded by the farmers for their property. Complaints as to the tactics of the middlemen, who adulterated the sugar by mixing it with flour, came in the form of petitions to the Government to regulate its sale.<sup>25</sup> Irrigation, which is an essential part of the scheme, has not yet been undertaken; nor have the roads and railroads, which are of vital importance for bringing the crop to the factory, yet been built. There has been a general lack of organization in the whole business. The cane shoots sent up from Java were kept four or five days in storage before planting and were all ruined; and the same thing happened with the second substitute supply. When the Government reduced the price it paid for cane, in April 1938, the growers refused to sell until the mill came to terms. This was not until the following November, and in the meantime the mill had to close down and suffered great loss.

The condition of the sugar market is such that Siam cannot hope—nor indeed does she expect—to sell her product abroad; but with time and wise management, she should be able to produce



enough to meet local needs without recourse to protective measures that will raise the cost of living appreciably. Recent tariff changes have raised the import duty on sugar for revenue and protective purposes, but this should act as a stimulus to production. At present radio talks are publicizing the native product—white, powdered, and granulated—but at least seven such factories would be needed to supply the Siamese market. The acreage now under cane has been increased to 16,000 *rai*, and in 1938 the Government spent Tcs. 400,000 for the purchase of cane. Since foreign sugar continues to flood the Siamese market and local consumption is increasing, the Government is planning to set up six more refineries and is pushing forward the growing of cane. The value of the sugar now produced annually is about Tcs. 1,200,000.

#### THE GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

With the shrinking of markets for Siam's raw materials as a result of tariff walls and the depression, the idea of industrialization became increasingly popular. It was held that the current unemployment offered a solution to the problem of labor shortage; and that if the Government would only subsidize those nascent industries that were allied to Siam's raw materials, money that was now lost pointlessly abroad would be kept in the country. 'Industrialize Siam' became the slogan of economic nationalism, though the lack of fuel and transportation facilities still gave pause. Some people pointed to the sad spectacle offered by the industrialized nations during the depression, but this appeared to be no deterrent.

Successive increases in the tariff rates between 1931 and 1936 induced some European companies to establish local plants, and it was in this way that matches and cigarettes came to be manufactured in Bangkok. The policy of raising tariffs to protect new local industries, which in turn increased the cost of living and made the people pay dearly for what was supposed to help them, was thus set in motion. A new note was struck when the Government backed the private attempt to establish a Siamese brewery. The State would gladly have pursued the same policy for its sugar, paper, and silk factories; but since private capital was either lacking or over-cautious, the State had to assume the responsibility of financing as well as managing the new industries. The Government

continues to welcome foreign capital, but only in such quantities as will enable it to retain for itself not only control but an increasing share in the profits.

The labor problem has not been solved. The Tcs. 200 immigration fee has cut down the supply of abundant and satisfactory labor, and the Siamese are incapable both numerically and psychologically of assuming the role in their country's development that the Government is trying to reserve for them. To supplement the few foreign-trained Siamese students, the Government decided in 1932 to offer technical training in the capital. The Chulalongkorn School of Science, which was subsequently founded, has become popular; but so far attempts to coordinate technical training with industrial positions through the apprentice system have been ineffectual. More time and more practical specialized knowledge is required before Siamese technicians can replace foreigners. Both from the commercial and the research points of view the industrialization of Siam offers almost unlimited possibilities, which as yet have barely been touched. The industries so far created come nowhere near supplying the home market, and the possibility of developing others for export has not even found a place on the official agenda. But the first step must be exhaustive preliminary study and extensive development of the means of communication.

The Government is correct in concentrating for the time being on the home market. According to Andrews, Siam must continue for many years to depend exclusively on filling local needs. It must not attempt large-scale production of goods where there is little demand or compete with foreign goods that can be bought cheaper than they can be produced in the country. Siam seems definitely committed to the policy of cultivating raw materials for the export market and to confining her few industries to local consumption.

The paternalism of the Government under the absolute monarchy, which was confined concretely to bridge-building, public health legislation, and emergency aid to stricken areas, has expanded under the constitutional régime. Such organizations as already existed have been developed. Thus the government laboratory has increased its activities; the National Store Department centralized government buying; the skeleton Board of Commercial Development has been extended; trade commissioners have been estab-

lished in Siam's principal foreign markets; and consuls abroad have been assigned the task of finding new outlets for Siamese produce. The Government has shown itself willing to arbitrate labor disputes and to protect Siamese labor against foreign competitors. In every way it has encouraged the 'Buy Siamese' policy. In short, as far as money and technique have permitted, it has become the exponent of economic nationalism. Indeed, the paternalism of the Government is such that it is difficult to see how sufficient ambition will ever be aroused in the passive Siamese to enable them to compete with the Chinese, whose encroachments cannot be warded off indefinitely. The industrialization of Siam involves nothing short of a re-education of the whole people.

The prospects of the state industries seem to be good in view of the capable way in which the Government has managed the railroads and aviation. But its more recent activities have not been so carefully carried out. The supply of sugar cane is insufficient to keep the new factory at Lampang running to capacity; paper is now twice as expensive as it was before the Government put up its factory; and the Government's attempts to grow cotton seem to have proved that, though the soil may be suitable, the climate is not. Each situation was insufficiently studied before the Government plunged in, and the capital at its disposal was inadequate. The Government is also too eager to take over industries that are now in foreign hands when it lacks the experience, technique, and capital to replace the present companies.

Faulty execution, however, has not invalidated the whole concept, especially as there is no desire to industrialize Siam to the point of importing raw materials simply to manufacture them in the country. But it is desirable to experiment with indigenous products. Thus it might perhaps be more economic to export only milled rice, and not paddy; sawn timber, and not logs; smelted tin, and not ores; soap and margarine, and not copra. Animal husbandry and scientific fisheries could give rise to innumerable industries whose potential value and scope must first be established. The army seems to have taken over this task of appraisal by experimentation and is also studying the various handicaps and obstacles that lie in the way of developing local industries.

By the end of 1939 Siam had taken new and long strides in the

direction of *étatisme* and economic nationalism. The Government has deliberately embarked on a long policy of state subsidy. The new internal loan of Tcs. 20,000,000 is to be used for the encouragement of local industries; and the taking over of the oil and tobacco industries, the raising of tariffs, and the various projects for government participation in the rubber, sugar, paper, clothing, foodstuffs, rice, and saw-milling industries are all part of the same program. The Government continues to insist, however, that it has no intention of competing with private trade appearances to the contrary.

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## XV · PUBLIC WORKS

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### TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Siam to-day is a very different country from the inaccessible land that formerly stagnated off the beaten seaways of the world. She has over 2,000 miles of railroads and 1,000 miles of roads and is rapidly extending construction under two five-year plans; she has motor boats, steamers, and junks galore on the rivers and along the coasts; she has 8,000 automobiles, of which more than half are in Bangkok; and she has air and radio communication with Europe and Australia. Both in her communications with outside peoples and in internal accessibility she has made immense strides in a comparatively short and recent period.

The original forms of transportation were naturally determined by geography and climate.<sup>1</sup> A separate area is formed by the Menam plain, which is open to transportation all the year round. Connecting canals make the water level uniform there. In the region near the delta the Menam is influenced by tides, and at all times it is filled with boats of every kind. Near the sea tugs are used to tow boats up to Bangkok. Settlements follow the river and canals. Floating markets come into being everywhere; and the density of river traffic, which varies according to the seasonal supply of goods, reaches its height in December and January. Paddy boats go up the river during the rains, load their cargo as soon as the crop is harvested, and return immediately so as to benefit by the high-water level.

On the upper Mekong fifty-foot boats are poled upstream by crews of six or seven Lao boatmen under Chinese direction. It takes a month for a 4,000 pound cargo, made up chiefly of hardware and textiles, to cover a distance of 220 miles. Goods may now be sent by rail from Bangkok to Lampang and thence to Nongkai by truck; after this they are taken by boat through the river cataracts to Vientiane and Luang Prabang. Siam's sphere of

commercial influence extends far into the interior of French Laos.

The buffalo cart predominates as a means of transportation along the edges of the Menam plain and in the plateau and hill country. These carts have high wheels, which enable them to pass through the lowland marshes. The light ox-cart prevails in the pasture area and in the hills at the foot of the mountains, where the terrain is drier, as it does also in western and peninsular Siam. But the ideal ground for ox-carts is the Korat Plateau. In winter, after the rice harvest, heavy traffic passes over its vast network of tracks, which lead principally to Korat, the terminus of the railroad until 1920. In those days the journey from the frontier to Korat took three weeks, and eight carts were required to transport one ton of rice at a cost of Tcs.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to Tcs. 2 per cart. Although resin, hides, and cardamoms are all profitable in this region, rice is by far the most important merchandise. The difficulty of navigating the Mekong makes Bangkok the chief rice center, despite the proximity of Saigon. During the rainy season the swollen rivers of the plateau can be used for transportation. It is believed that this area, which makes up 31.7 per cent of the whole country, will develop more in proportion to the growth of communications than any other region in Siam.

The transportation system of northern Siam is in general quite different from that of the Korat plateau, but similar to it in that during the dry season only carts can be used on the plains. In the mountains human carriers and pack animals are both used; the former means is confined to the dry season because of the necessity of sleeping on the ground. The average carrier travels eighteen miles a day with a load of sixty pounds; he is a farmer during the malarial rainy season when the river beds that form the paths are most impassable. Groups of six to eight young men usually do the carrying and barter their goods for salt and *miang* tea.

Caravans of forty to sixty pack animals, driven by eight or ten drivers, transport rice, hides, and salt. About forty animals can carry  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons—usually rice, which is brought down from remote regions to the rivers and railroads or to areas where the crop has failed. The pony and the mule, which are conspicuously absent in all but northwestern Siam, make up the caravans that leave

Chiengmai for Burma, Thibet, the Shan States, and Yunnan. These animals were introduced into northern Siam from south China, and even today these caravans are usually owned by Yunnanese. They come to Siam and Indo-China to exchange salt for their loads of opium, tiger skins, wax, and honey, which eventually gravitate by easy stages down to Bangkok.

In the early days travelers had to suffer delays of all sorts, one of the most curious being the natives' misleading concept of distance and their general willingness to serve as guides in regions totally unknown to them.<sup>2</sup> Bullock carts could usually be rented in any numbers; but these animals were slow, stampeded easily, and ate huge quantities of the fodder they transported—the alternative being to waste half a day while they grazed. Most travelers found coolies too expensive, almost as dilatory, and an even greater food problem. Elephants were, and are still, usually employed for the heaviest kinds of transport; they are used for hauling teak, for collecting rattans, and for any journey far from home. The loss of the bamboo, that other staff of Oriental life, would not be more disastrous to the Lao than the extinction of the elephant, the source and standard of Lao wealth.<sup>3</sup>

For years the preoccupation of the Public Works Department with roads and bridges around Bangkok was such that the country outside the capital was totally neglected. The chief complaint of provincials at that time was that the money they paid in taxes was swallowed up in Bangkok's embellishment. Pallegoix's description of the hardships of missionary travel, even as late as Mongkut's reign, gives a harrowing idea of the country's isolation and inaccessibility.<sup>4</sup> The sufferings and privations of boat and bullock travel alone were enough to earn salvation, without counting the nights when the travelers were devoured by legions of ants or mosquitoes, or the danger of attack by tiger, snake, or scorpion. It is no wonder that the Siamese themselves did little traveling.

In recent years a major change has been effected by mechanized means of communication; and its most significant aspect is the gradual evolution, not yet completed, from water to land transportation.

*Railroads*

The development of Siam's railroad system represents one of the greatest efforts of any Asiatic country to emulate the West. Moreover, although accomplished with the financial and technical aid of the Occident, it did not involve any loss of Siamese control.

In 1880 Great Britain's interest in a back-door approach to southern China was accentuated by France's rising ambitions in southeastern Asia. The former's anxiety to connect Burma and Siam with Yunnan was behind the concession requested by a former governor of Singapore, Andrew Clarke, to construct a 922 kilometer road from Bangkok to Chiengsen via Chiangmai. Clarke sold his concession to an English group, and in the meantime the German Krupp syndicate sent their representative with new proposals criticizing the English plans.<sup>5</sup> The scheme was finally dropped by the British, but it had the advantage of effecting the exploration of the north and of making Chulalongkorn aware of the importance of railroad construction.

The first line actually built was a private enterprise, undertaken by the Dane, De Richelieu, and covered the sixteen miles from Bangkok to Paknam. It was completed in 1893. The original stock was issued in one catty (Tcs. 80) shares, and for years it was a steady dividend-earner in spite of the competition of cheaper river transportation. Had it not been for the king's financial support, however, its construction might have been delayed for many years; and it was largely on this ground that the Siamese Government justified its refusal to renew the concession in 1936. Even in its last three years its net profits averaged Tcs. 100,000, and throughout its life as a private concern this railroad gave a return of approximately 29 per cent on its capital. Shareholders, mostly foreigners, grumbled at the price they received and openly said that the Government's offer would not encourage further investment in similar Siamese undertakings. This case certainly contributed heavily to the general belief that the Government is trying to oust foreigners from further participation in Siam's economic development.

The Bangkok-Korat line was the first important piece of railroad construction, but from its inception it became involved in



international rivalries. Not only was France's expansion in Cambodia and Laos at this time making clear her intention of diverting the trade of that region from Bangkok to Saigon, but Siam feared further aggression at the expense of her eastern frontiers. Military and commercial considerations combined to favor the construction of the Korat line in spite of the great technical difficulties involved in its construction and of the fact that it passed through a relatively unpopulated area.

In 1892 the Government advertised for bids for the construction of 264 kilometers of standard gauge railway from Bangkok to Korat. The chief bidders were Bethige, the Krupp representative, and a Scottish contractor, G. M. Campbell. The consuls backed the respective claims of their nationals; and a bitter struggle ensued, which was but part of a larger commercial rivalry. The British first drew blood and secured the original contract—at a cost of about (Straits) \$30,000 per mile, which proved to be quite inadequate. In compensation the Germans insisted on the appointment of Bethige as head of the Railroad Department. The king was also persuaded that it would be a clever move to appoint German army engineers to supervise the work of the British contractor; and in this way a fight was initiated, which lasted for six years. The Germans introduced an expensive system with red tape and resounding titles, which produced a comic opera effect.<sup>6</sup> But they succeeded in getting the contract cancelled. The dispute was submitted to arbitration, and in 1899 the English concessionaire was awarded (Straits) \$800,000 and the costs of the proceedings. The line was completed in 1900 by German engineers using German materials under government supervision.

This first of the state railroads was costly to build in life, money, time, and litigation; but it yielded a rich return in experience. It took eight and a half years to complete, whereas the original time limit called for five years; and its cost exceeded the original estimate of Tcs. 10,000,000 by more than half as much again. The original plan, which had been vetoed because of additional expense in construction, was subsequently paid for many times over in running charges. As it was, it proved hard to build the earth embankments in the low rice country, owing to the expansion and contraction of the banks. About a hundred miles north of

Bangkok, where the line enters the mountains and jungle, the nature of the country changes completely. The region was productive of malarial fever, and white men and native laborers alike died like flies. The construction of this railroad caused inestimable injury to everyone concerned<sup>7</sup> and prejudiced the Government permanently against entering into contracts with foreign firms.

In spite of all these misfortunes, Chulalongkorn was right when he said, at the opening of the line, that he counted the day one of the most auspicious in his life. A big step in the country's commercial progress had finally been taken. The railroad, in addition to its traffic in livestock and stone, gave a great impetus to the extension of rice cultivation in the immense plains of the northeast. Even before it was finished, the railroad had begun to revolutionize the caravan trade of Korat. Settlements were made along the railway to the detriment of the river ports, which had been heretofore the main barter stations between the paddy boats and the producers of the hinterland. But though the railroad certainly could compete with the slow and small-scale caravans, it could not rival the paddy boats in the transportation of cheap goods.

If the Siamese had learned that it was a mistake to construct railroads by contract, the British had also realized that they must forestall German rivalry. This was made possible by the financial situation. When the British Financial Adviser reckoned, in 1901, that Siam had spent (U. S.) \$6,000,000 to keep the railroads in her own hands, he suggested setting up a committee to evolve some means of bringing back to the State a larger and more direct return on so enormous an outlay. Inexperience and mismanagement had doubtless been responsible for many of the mistakes, but a new general policy would help further in the control and purchase of supplies in the open market. Siam had learned that the old policy of private tenders was not economical.

The root of the problem, however, remained untouched. The treaty powers continued to insist on having a strong hand in the construction, and there was not enough money inside the country to float the necessary loan. The next few railroads had to be constructed with foreign capital, but it had to be acquired with a minimum of foreign interference. As it worked out, the northern line out of Bangkok was built by the Germans; and the southern

line by the British and on a narrow gauge. The French treaty of 1907 provided that no railroad construction should be undertaken in eastern Siam unless done by French or Siamese engineers, with the result that Siam built her northeastern lines alone. The war eliminated German competition, and the northern line was reconstructed on a narrow-gauge basis.

In 1901 work began simultaneously on the 42 kilometer line from Korat to Lopburi and on the 152 kilometer line from Bangkok to Petchaburi, which became the first section of the Peninsular Railroad. Two years later the first foreign loan of £1,000,000 was raised in London. By 1909 the northern line had got to Den Yai, where it crossed the old caravan routes; and there it remained until 1912, when work was resumed. Chiangmai was reached in 1921. The terrain was difficult and the Chinese labor employed was badly decimated by malaria. The heavy mortality was considerably diminished when the less efficient but acclimatized Lao labor was used. Since that time Lao labor has been employed exclusively, as their wages remain in the country and this employment serves to raise the standard of living as well as to offset to some extent the monoculture prevalent in the region. A branch line east from Bangkok was built as far as Petriu, where it was halted in 1907 by the French acquisition of Battambang and Angkor.

The famous Peninsular Railroad got off to a bad start. In March 1899 it was announced that the concession to construct a line from Kedah to Singapore, which had been granted to Charles Dunlop of Singapore in 1891, had lapsed because of his failure to complete the work within the eight-year time limit. When the concession was granted, it seemed likely that this would be Siam's first railroad as it involved no serious engineering problems, a distance of only seventy-six miles, and the prospect of a lucrative traffic. Its chief stumbling block was a chronic one: European capitalists would not invest unless some return were guaranteed on their capital, and this the Siamese Government refused to do. As a result, no company could be formed and little work was done.

Capitalists were not the only obstacle. The numerous Chinese engaged in the peninsular coastal trade resented possible inter-

ference. The monopoly they enjoyed in that region would be destroyed; and their control would be lost over the poor native producers, who had had until then no alternative but to accept any terms that the Chinese might offer. The railroad could never hope to compete with their junks as carriers, but it could and did open the country to capitalistic exploitation.

The failure of this concession made the British increasingly nervous lest the Germans should construct the Peninsular Railroad. When Siam wanted to raise another loan, Great Britain stipulated for the Peninsular Railroad construction. The Malayan Government would lend £4,000,000 specifically for the construction of this railroad under a Siamese official of British nationality, and there would be open tenders for supplies. The agreement reached on this basis settled the long-standing peninsular issue, and a later agreement in 1913 provided for a further loan of £750,000 to connect the western coast with the main line. Setbacks due to floods delayed this line's completion until 1922, a year after that of the northern line. Bangkok was brought within forty-eight hours of Singapore and thirty-six of Penang, and a week nearer to Europe by sea. Certain drawbacks still remained, however; the gauges of the northern and southern lines were different, and there was a hiatus between the terminal of the two lines in Bangkok until French engineers bridged the Menam.

From 1920 to 1930 railroad construction received such an impetus that Siam was placed among the foremost Asiatic nations in rail construction and compared favorably with countries of a far higher degree of economic development. Undoubtedly the most important act of Rama VI's reign was his legislation in the sphere of communications, which settled the method of expropriating land, regulated the transportation of passengers and freight, and laid down public safety regulations. There was even a ten-year plan for the extension of the eastern and northeastern lines and a unification of gauge. By the end of Rama VI's reign 932 kilometers had been built, and 690 kilometers were under construction—an increase of 177 per cent over the previous reign.

Between 1917 and 1931, when Prince Purachatra was Minister of Communications, the gross receipts from the railroads amounted to Tcs. 195,000,000, their working expenses to Tcs. 86,500,000,

and the sum placed in reserve to Tcs. 12,000,000. Before the revolution the capital cost of the railroad system amounted to about Tcs. 190,000,000.<sup>8</sup> Not only was this an excellent investment for the Government; but land heretofore inaccessible was put under cultivation, and land values were increasing everywhere. The Government power station was put under railroad management, and the railroads came to control 7,000 kilometers of their own telegraph lines in addition to the 8,000 kilometers maintained for the Telephone and Telegraph Department.

When the Siamese Government determined to run its own railroads, not a single Siamese had ever participated in the construction or administration of a railroad. Not only did the Siamese teach themselves how to do it, but they made it pay magnificently. Certainly much of the credit is due to Prince Purachatra, who made a study tour of world railroads, from which he evolved a policy for Siam. Given a free hand by the king on his return, he took care that roads should not parallel the railroads but be built to feed them. Although this eliminated a mutually destructive competition, it had the unfortunate result of leaving most of the country without any transportation save by boat. Many of the lines pass through much wasteland and jungle, and freight rates are comparatively high. But the returns are prodigious because the railroads were on the whole inexpensively built and enjoy a monopoly of the arterial traffic of the kingdom. Malaya has criticized Siam through every possible channel for not opening the peninsula by roads so that mass-produced motor vehicles can run in competition with the railroads; yet Malaya's railroad position is nothing like so good as Siam's. Except in the capital itself, monopoly characterizes Siam's transportation system. Motor trucks carry all the merchandise between Lampang and Chiengrai without rail competition; and the *gharries*, which were forced out of Bangkok, installed themselves at Lampang, where until now they have succeeded in keeping out tricycle taxis.

An interesting innovation sponsored by Prince Purachatra was the use of Diesel locomotives for long hauls on the railroad. A combination of circumstances made the adoption of Diesels desirable. The lack of space in the Bangkok station for housing wood fuel made the purchase of more land in the heart of Bangkok for

storage purposes a disproportionately expensive item. More important was the threatened exhaustion of Siam's rich forest reserves. One Diesel engine, it was pointed out, could do the work of three ordinary engines, in addition to accelerating the service. The running time both to Singapore and Chiengmai was cut down by five hours. The vernacular press was very vocal in its criticism of so expensive a purchase, but the absolute monarchy did not have to consider such opposition. In 1928-29 Siam tried out her first Diesels; in December 1931 they were put on the Malayan run, and two years later they drew the Northern Express to Chiengmai. The constitutional régime inherited fifteen major and six lesser Diesel engines, to which fourteen more were later added. These purchases were made in Denmark and Switzerland.

In the last years of the absolute monarchy the extension of the railroad system to the northeast was actively projected, whereas the old plan to build a railroad across the Burmese frontier remained only a recurring rumor, dating back to 1905. The development of the international and local air services affected both these projects. To strengthen economic ties with French Laos, the railroad was extended to the Cambodian border in 1926; but it was an unremunerative enterprise because the rails ran through uncultivated and largely uninhabited country. It had been undertaken on the promise that Indo-China would build a connecting railroad with Saigon via Pnom-Penh, but for years nothing was done on the French side. It was only at the repeated request of Prince Purachatra that Indo-China constructed the road from Battambang to Sisophon and Aranya and on to Angkor, which was becoming an increasingly important tourist attraction. Although this road brought some traffic to the Siamese railroad, the original promise called for a railroad, not a road. Over a period of sixteen years Henri Cucherousset wrote sixty articles in his *Eveil Economique de l'Indo-Chine* advocating the construction of this line before Saigon's opposition was finally overcome. In 1932, as a public works depression measure, the line from Saigon to Mongkol-Borey, fifty-eight kilometers from the Siamese border, was sanctioned; and in 1939 it was decided to complete the connection with the Siamese system.

By the time this line was completed, Siam had finished her Nakon Panom-Khonkhaen railroad extension, which had been post-

poned because of the depression and also because it was timed according to the slower-moving French line from Tan Ap to Thakkek. The Siamese were anxious to complete their section first on a direct line to Bangkok lest the French should regain the traffic lost to them through lack of transportation facilities. The long-discussed plan for an outlet to the sea for French Laos had slumbered in the Public Works Department for some forty years. It was only as a result of the depression and pressure from Governor Pasquier that work was begun on this railroad and on a service road running parallel to it.

When the connecting bridge is built across the Mekong, Hanoi will be brought within one and a half days of Bangkok; Benthuy will become a nearer port for Siamese Laos than Bangkok in her Hong Kong trade; and there will be a greater development of the Mekong valley on both sides of the frontier. The immediate question is whether Bangkok or Saigon will prove the commercial lodestone of this region.

Political and economic upsets in recent years have temporarily suspended Siam's execution of the railroad policy that was taken over bodily from the absolute monarchy. Although there were few engineering difficulties, the lack of nearby quarries further retarded the work on the Korat-Khonkaen line, which was not opened until June 1933. Beyond that point work was continued at a slackened speed to the Mekong, where two lines branch off—one north to Nongkhai opposite Vientiane, and the other eastward to Nakon Panom facing Thakkek. The necessity of waiting for the work to be resumed on the French side and of working on a reduced budget delayed the opening of an express service between Bangkok and Ubol until March 1938.

Siam's railroads still run at a profit; but the margin is considerably smaller than formerly, and criticism of them is much louder. The Assembly, however, has not been altogether just in blaming the railroad management for the diminution of profits. The decline of the Meklong Railroad's gross receipts has been due to the smaller catch in fish and to the competition of motor launches for the passenger traffic.<sup>9</sup> Purchases of new rolling stock from Japan and Germany and the enlargement of the railroad workshops were inevitable expenditures; and Diesels, despite their superior mileage,

depreciate faster and are more expensive to buy than steam engines.

The main justifiable criticism is that directed against the railroad's arbitrarily high freight rates. In reply to a query in the Assembly in 1935 as to what had been done in that respect to meet the depression, the Government replied that freight rates were being reduced all the time.<sup>10</sup> Since 1932, 15 per cent had been taken off the transport cost of rice and 30 per cent off paddy, and the extra charge over mountainous region had been abolished. This reply was not regarded as satisfactory, however; and the following October certain representatives again accused the Government of thinking only of profits and not enough of supplying adequate rolling stock.

The latent and long-standing opposition to the railroad for its autocratic exercise of a monopoly right, which was openly regarded as out of harmony with a democratic régime, came to a head in the Assembly session of September 1936. It was pointed out that the railroads were empowered in fourteen different ways to raise the various tariffs on freight alone, and that these increases could be enforced immediately after publication. Such a procedure needed change, as did the railroad's refusal to accept any responsibility for loss or damage. In cases between the railroads and individuals, it was claimed, the former should no longer be allowed to judge its own cases.

Even such serious criticisms seem very minor when compared to the physical and psychological asset that Siam's railroad system has proved to be. It has united with a 2,000 mile network the four major and heretofore isolated regions of a country about the size of France. It has brought Bangkok nearer to Europe and within forty-eight hours of the three major ports of neighboring countries. The state railroad is valued at Tcs. 185,000,000, of which only Tcs. 50,000,000 was raised in Malaya and Great Britain.<sup>11</sup> Its freight, which carries exports for distant countries and local traffic, is valued annually at Tcs. 8,000,000. The number of accidents is amazingly small—in the 5,180,434 kilometers run since the opening of the first railroad, only one passenger and four officials have been killed.<sup>12</sup> Its cars are miracles of cleanliness and comfort in a tropical country. Moreover, the Siamese have greatly increased their



self-confidence and their prestige in the eyes of the world by proving themselves capable of running efficiently so highly technical a service.

### *Roads*

To this day Siam is virtually a roadless land. For years the only roads that existed were confined to the capital and were built mostly for the pleasure of the wealthier Siamese. The transportation of the people and of the country's produce was and is still carried chiefly by river and on a network of canals throughout the country.

In ancient Siam neither piety, superstition, nor public convenience impelled the kings to build bridges, roads, or caravanserais, as in some other nations of Asia. When Crawford visited Siam in 1822, he found that bridges in Bangkok consisted of a single plank and that there were only two considerable roads in the kingdom—one leading from the old to the new capital and the other from Chantabun to Tungyai.<sup>13</sup> In 1861 the foreign community petitioned Mongkut to build a road between the consulates and the shopping district on the east side of the river. This "New Road" was opened to traffic in March 1864, and its inauguration was widely celebrated. For years there were no other streets; and it was only possible to move around the city by boat, or by elephant along the soft mud when the tide was out. All the streets and suburban roads were made after 1895.

The need for taking radical steps to improve Bangkok's streets was made less urgent by the electric tram service introduced into the capital in the 1890's by the Siam Electric Company. After some initial hesitation the trams were filled to overflowing by the Siamese, and in a few years they paid the shareholders 34 per cent dividends.<sup>14</sup>

Since neither roads nor railroads existed when Siam decided to modernize herself, the authorities concentrated their attention on the latter and insisted on keeping roads in a subordinate position. The modest status of highways was reflected in the budget, from which appropriations for road construction were grudgingly allotted. From 1904-18 Siam's annual road expenditure averaged Tcs. 527,900; from 1919-23, Tcs. 1,637,500; from 1924-28, Tcs.

2,190,000; and from 1929-31, Tcs. 4,254,000. By 1932 a total of Tcs. 38,000,000 had been spent on roads in twenty-seven years.

On the eve of the depression the railroad passenger traffic was estimated at 0.43 per cent of the whole population; and after a lapse of ten years, during which period the system was extended, the traveling public was still rated as only 0.63 per cent. This was considered ample justification for Siam's dilatory road policy.<sup>16</sup> Yet compared with neighboring countries, which had made far greater efforts in this respect, the cost of road construction was relatively cheap, Tcs. 16,000 per kilometer. Moreover, wherever a network of roads had been built, the price of living in the region had been brought down.

The old régime's cardinal principle—that roads must feed and not compete with the railroads—was as profitable to the State as it was inconvenient to the occasional motorist. Such roads as existed were built either for strategic purposes or at right angles to the rails. Since Siamese villages usually lie in river valleys separated from each other by mountains or jungles, the only connection between these isolated communities was by mountain trails or through a tributary of the river highway. Thus the motorist always had to return to the railroad if he wished to reach the next valley.

The central plain, which is virtually without roads, has a good canal system in the rainy season; and its hardened surface supports ox-cart traffic in the dry weather. Until the Paknam road was built, only one road led out of Bangkok, to the airport of Don Muang; and that was built only as the result of prolonged demands. Unlike most great cities, which are usually the center of a network of roads, Bangkok has vehicular isolation. Its few hundred taxis circulate within the capital's confines, and even to-day one can leave Bangkok only by boat or by rail. Such roads as exist are limited to the frontier regions or to areas totally lacking in other transportation facilities.

In the old days the independent Rajas of the peninsula constructed a few extremely rough roads in the tin regions, to which other routes were later added to give access to rubber plantations. Only Puket Island has metalled roads, and these can be used by ox-carts only after dark because the heat melts the asphalt during

the day. From Puket a road stretches north along the eastern coast over the Kra Isthmus to Tungsong, where it joins the southern railway; and Nakon Sritemmerat is connected with Kantang and Patalung. Farther south towards the frontier a trans-peninsula road stretches fifty miles from Kwangnieng station to Satul on the west coast. The roads become more numerous as they approach Malaya; there is a road from Pattani to the southern tip of Siam at Betong, and another from Singora to Padang Basar.

Overland trade routes, which are really nothing more than jungle tracks with wooden bridges, have for centuries linked Burma and Siam; the main routes are between Moulmein, the terminus of the Burmese railroads, and Rahang, and between Mergui and Petchaburi. This was the short cut route from India to China along which the first European merchants and missionaries traveled, disembarking at Tenasserim. In 1921 work was begun on a 119 kilometer road between Sawanoloke and Rahang, which was completed in 1938. Of the two roads through the Shan States, the one through Taunggyi and Loilem to Kengtung is better known than the road from Kengtung south to the Siamo-Burmese frontier, 108 miles away. The former road can be traveled by car only in the dry season, and there is a fair amount of goods traffic along both these routes in the form of buses and caravans. One can travel from Kengtung to Chiengrai in a day, but this trip of only fifty miles is very exhausting and expensive since gasoline in this region costs two rupees a gallon.

In the north the 200-mile Chiengrai-Lampang route, built in 1916, is the most important road in the kingdom. After its extension to Chiengsen and the Shan border at Kengtung, it met the caravan route into southern China. This road opened a region devoid of railroads and brought much traffic to the Northern Express at Lampang; it also attracted the Mekong traffic at Chiengrai. A motor bus, for the modest sum of Tcs. 2, covers in a few hours a journey that formerly took days. This road has revolutionized the economy of the region and has also facilitated the passage of contraband opium. In 1919 work was begun on the ninety-mile Denjaya-Phrae-Nan Highway No. 1, but fifteen years later only fifty miles had been completed. It is hoped eventually to link this road to the Chiengrai network.

In the northeast Siam's communications stretch towards five different points along the river frontier, but rail rather than road is the basis of Siam's hold on the Mekong valley region. An area of 63,400 square miles until very recently had nothing but rough cart tracks, usable by automobile only in dry weather. The most notable of these was the old caravan route from Korat to Nongkai. It is unlikely that anything will be done to improve these tracks since in addition to the railroads there is a local air service in the region, which delivers mail.

In 1931 a road was opened from Ubol to Paksé, the latter being the most important trade center in southern Laos. This road was completed in the record time of a little more than a year. For three years before its completion lorries had been running between Ubol and Khemmerat, drawing to the former a large part of the trade of the central Mekong valley. But the new roads built after interminable delay on the French side of the Mekong frontier are now diverting Laos's trade to Saigon and Pnom-Penh.

The revolution of 1932 synchronized with a turning point in the history of Siam's roads. The year before had witnessed an increase in the number of carts and motor vehicles. New means of locomotion, especially motor transportation, a larger volume of traffic, a greater weight in loads, and the greatly increased speed in travel were all forcing the administration to face the issue and make some radical and immediate change in its road policy. During the depression the Department of Ways had lost the budgetary ground it had painfully gained, although the organization of licensing and registering motor vehicles was improving.

In its first years the new Government's attention was taken up by larger issues, and it continued the old policy of subordinating roads to railroads. The depression seemed to suggest that the administration should confine itself to maintaining the existing highways since the sum allotted to roads was less than a third of what it had been the year before. The only change initiated was to complete one highway at a time where it was most necessary, instead of continuing the old policy of starting a road in one place and then leaving it to start another elsewhere.

Slowly the importance of highway construction was driven home. The foreign experts who made economic surveys, especially

Andrews, emphasized Siam's need for more and better road construction in order to open up rural districts and generally to improve provincial standards of living. Roads would give the farmers more security than they had heretofore enjoyed and also put them into contact with world markets. During the depression banditry had increased and was still rife, even within a few miles of the capital. Nor was it fair to expect the farmer, whose taxes were the backbone of the revenue, to walk for days along an almost impassable track in order to see the *nai amphur* or the doctor.

In 1936, when Siam began her new road-building policy seriously, she took stock of the situation. Out of 3,587 kilometers of roads only 125 were first class, and these had been built at a cost of Tcs. 38,000,000. In proportion to area, there was 1 kilometer of road to every 310 square kilometers, as against 1 to 8 in Malaya and 1 to 22 in Indo-China; and the Siamese roads were very inferior in quality to those of both her neighbors. The number of motor vehicles, especially lorries and trucks, was growing rapidly, in spite of the fact that most of the roads were only cart tracks, which were frequently halted by paddy fields and swamps and negotiable only in the dry season. In the virtually roadless northeast, motor vehicles were increasing steadily; in 1935 47 automobiles and 252 trucks were registered in this area. Before the 1939 war about 4,500 cars existed in the whole kingdom, of which the majority were in the capital. Gasoline was available in the road areas; and although it was expensive, bus fares were not high. In Bangkok about 90 per cent of the taxi drivers and 70 per cent of the owners are Siamese.<sup>16</sup> An Automobile Association was founded in 1934.

From the whole kingdom, in the low year of 1932, the Government obtained a revenue from vehicle licenses of over a million ticals. This tax, with a maximum annual charge of Tcs. 15, was later applied to bullock carts in thirteen provinces. Assembly members protested vehemently that such carts were essential to farmers for transporting paddy and that they were not for hire like other taxable vehicles.<sup>17</sup> A number of carts were even burned to avoid paying this tax.

The road-building program announced in 1936 is designed to connect the principal cities of the country, and three roads have been selected as of major and immediate importance. All of them

radiate from Bangkok—to Don Muang, to Nondaburi, and to Paknam. The hookup of the capital with the provincial roads is expected to take a number of years. The whole plan calls for the construction of 14,900 kilometers of roads over a period of eighteen years at a total cost of Tcs. 153,000,000. For the past two years the Public Works Department has been busy felling trees along thirty of these proposed routes, and already a certain proportion of them are usable for motor traffic in the dry season. Work has been delayed by the impossibility of maintaining a constant labor force. Workers are drawn from the farming class, and they refuse to work when the rice-farming season begins. To finish its work in the time allotted, the Department has had to replace this unreliable labor with machinery wherever possible.

This ambitious project will mean the freer circulation of the heretofore isolated villagers and a greater flow of internal, and later of foreign, trade. Already land along the embryo trunk roads is being taken up eagerly. Needless to say, military roads are receiving primary attention.

### *Aviation*

The development of international aviation has made Siam the aerial gateway to the Far East. For the past decade Bangkok, which was always regarded as hopelessly off the beaten sea and land track, has found itself a key air center. Siam's remarkable air tradition and her extraordinary susceptibility to new ideas have permitted her to profit by this position.

Siam's interest in aviation antedated that of many Oriental countries. A few years after airplanes were invented, and in the same year that Bleriot flew across the English channel, Siam sent three officers to study aviation in France. Two years later they returned to Siam, bringing with them the materials to build up local aviation. Without foreign aid they organized a flying corps with trained pilots and mechanics. When Siam declared war in 1917, France asked for Siamese aviators; and Siam was able to send five hundred fully equipped pilots to the western front. After the war the service in Siam itself was expanded.

In 1919 Siam became one of the first signatories of the International Convention for Aerial Navigation, which allowed the

pilots of other signatory powers to fly over, or to land in, Siamese territory without special permission. That same year the English expert, Sir Ross Smith, on a visit to Siam, said that the Don Muang aerodrome was the first real aerodrome he had encountered since leaving Europe. At that time Bagdad's airport had not been begun, and Karachi and Calcutta had landing fields only. Although it was primarily a military aerodrome, Don Muang's resources were placed unreservedly at the service of every aerial line from Europe to the Far East.

In 1922 a local air service was started to the northeastern provinces. Siam is by no means an ideal country for flying, but the extreme difficulty of surface transportation in flooded and mountainous areas away from the railroad makes aviation advantageous, and especially important from a public health viewpoint in checking epidemics in inaccessible regions. For eight and a half years the army operated the northeastern service continuously, without fatalities and with a 100 per cent Siamese personnel. In 1930 long and tedious conferences on the subject of civil versus military aviation were productive of much bitter bureaucratic and political jealousy and ended in the establishment of a private commercial line, the Aerial Transport Company.

This company purchased planes from Great Britain and the United States and, in conjunction with Imperial Airways and Air-France, operated a line between Burma and Hanoi, which was extended to Hong Kong in March 1938. Without receiving a government subsidy, and within six years of its formation, this company had written off three-fourths of the original expenditure and entered the profit-making stage. From its headquarters at Korat the Aerial Transport Company provides a bi-weekly service with passenger and freight rates at less than 25 per cent of the former army charges. The Government has cooperated to the extent of constructing aerodromes for commercial use at Lomsakdi, Udorn, Ban Perm, and Nern Teng, and other emergency landing fields.

In the late 1920's, when the Dutch were pioneering their air-route to the East Indies, they were at first discouraged from including Don Muang in their itinerary because heavy rains frequently made landing there impossible. Nor did Siam at first take the

necessary steps to make Don Muang practicable all the year round. But in 1930 she installed new pumps, electric control towers, and wireless equipment, with the result that this aerodrome is now one of the largest and best equipped fields in Asia.

Shortly after this the French service to Saigon included Bangkok in its itinerary; and with the amalgamation of the five French companies—Air-Union, Air-Orient, Aeropostale, Farman, and Cidna—into Air-France in September 1933, a speedier service was introduced with a new type of monoplane. That same month Imperial Airways, the last comer to Don Muang among the international services, finally decided not to make Rangoon the focal point for branching off to Hong Kong and Australia and chose Bangkok so as to link its service with Air-France's line to Saigon, Hanoi, and Hong Kong.

Siam's geographic value to international air service is obviously unique. To reach northern China without going over Siam means flying the Siberian wastes, possible only on summer schedules. It is possible to fly to Java and Australia over the Indian Ocean via Malaya, but this route is unsafe during the long seasons when the monsoons sweep the coast. To reach southern China via Malaya means a detour of 2,300 kilometers, of which 1,160 would be flown over the sea. As opposed to such uncertain, dangerous, and costly alternatives, Siam offers a shorter direct route, with telegraph and radio communications all the way, and with a climate free of typhoons and gales over the greater part of the country.

The Government, spurred on by an appreciation of its potentialities in the development of air transportation, began to cooperate wholeheartedly. In 1934 Don Muang underwent a transformation. Concrete and asphalt runways were installed such as no other aerodrome between London and Singapore then possessed, and wireless communication with aircraft was developed. A road was built between the capital and the aerodrome; and other improvements included meteorological stations, hangars, a first-class repair shop, pilot balloons, air charts, weather reports, etc. In 1935 a new flying ground was opened at Utaradit, and the Rangoon Government cooperated in reducing the hazards of the mountainous stretch between the two countries. An analogous arrangement was made with Malaya in regard to the dangerous stretch between Alor



Star and Victoria Point. In 1936, after the French Company asked for a wireless station at Pitsanuloke, the Government surveyed northwestern Siam with the intention of constructing a series of emergency landing fields along all the international routes.

In August 1939 the first German plane arrived in Bangkok on a trial flight for service between Bangkok and Berlin. After the outbreak of war in September 1939 it took almost a month to re-establish the other air schedules, and air mail rates increased appreciably. In November 1939 the Japanese Foreign Office announced an agreement with Siam—its first in air transport with any foreign country—for air service between Tokyo and Bangkok. This service, which was to bring Japan within eight or nine days of Europe, was scheduled to start in February 1940 but did not actually begin until later in the year. In January 1940 Siam announced prematurely another international air agreement, this time with Italy; but it later appeared that the Siamese Government had only submitted such a proposal. Within Siam itself, the north-eastern service was extended from Kon Kaen to Nakhon Phanom at the beginning of 1940.

#### *Water Communication and Irrigation*

Siam has always been—at least in historical times—a rice-producing country. Writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries referred frequently to the superior quality of Siamese rice, and ruins in eastern Siam show that irrigation had long been practised there. In Sawanaloke and Sukhothai provinces there are traces of the irrigation works on which the ancient capitals depended for their food supplies. Canals and irrigation works were constructed during the Ayuthian period by the Government and by individuals; but not until the reign of Chulalongkorn, when rice became the major export, was the paramount importance of waterways, both for communication and irrigation, actively recognized.

In the north the Laos have had to practise irrigation since without it there would be no crops at all. Their river works consist of primitive bamboo weirs. These weirs are made by communal effort; but they are regarded as the property of the local headmen or individual landowners, who receive as rental a portion of the

harvest.<sup>15</sup> In some cases, as with the royal dam at Laplé, the State has taken over these weirs and made them public and permanent.

The conditions in the central rice fields are different from those in the north. Canals exist here as waterways, but not until modern times have there been any irrigation works. Rain supplies only half of the water needed; and this puts Siam at a disadvantage in competing with Burma, which has double her rainfall. In the central plain the average rainfall of 41.43 inches is deficient since a sustained depth of six feet is required to mature the rice crop. The rainfall has to be supplemented by an inundation that must last a suitable length of time without, however, swamping the crop. A record of the Menam's inundations over a period of ninety-nine years shows that in thirty-two years water conditions were good, in twenty-two years only average, and in thirty years downright bad. For six years abnormally high water was recorded, and in nine years the water supply was excessive.

In 1831 a vast inundation spread over all regions of the country. In November of that year water covered even the plains of the northern forests to a depth of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  fathoms and from there spread south in rivulets over the whole rice plain. By December the waters reached Bangkok, and even within the city walls boats had to be used in all the streets and lanes.<sup>19</sup> This flood was one of the greatest disasters that had ever happened in Siam, and in the following dry season food was so dear that suffering was widespread.

In 1864-65 another period of great hardship followed a failure of the rice crop. For seven months King Mongkut prohibited the export of rice although one hundred vessels were lying in port awaiting their cargoes. The autumn of 1879 again witnessed heavy floods, but on nothing like the scale of 1831 since by that time more canals had been built; and in 1917 the last great flood occurred.

The development of rice exports from the great central plain made the Government aware of the deficiencies of the waterways and irrigation of that region. Canals had been allowed to silt up not only in the provinces but even in Bangkok itself. To many foreign critics, de-silting the country's natural waterways seemed a much more pressing public utility than the current craze for railroad building. When the railroads were built, they could not com-

pete with cheap boat transportation of paddy direct to the mills from the remote interior. To this day 80 per cent of the trade is still carried in boats, which in 1933 numbered 55,563. In 1892 Professor Keene made the startling prophecy that the time was approaching when the narrow inlet at the head of the Gulf of Siam would eventually be so entirely filled in that it would be possible to pass from Mergui and Tenasserim directly west to Chantabun.<sup>20</sup>

With the growth of rice exports, land values rose; and the vast amount of rich and undrained open country began to attract speculative attention. The great alluvial plain northeast of Bangkok lay in a lonely waste of swamps, where, in the absence of waterways, there were no settlers. Those who attempted to go back into the prairie soon had their huts overturned by herds of wild elephants. In 1892 a company called the Siam Canals, Land, & Irrigation Company obtained a concession to dig canals there and to construct locks. According to the contract, people settling along the canal banks were to pay the company certain dues; and on the completion of each *klong* the company had the right to sell or to cultivate the land adjacent. This excellent idea, called the Rangsit system, was doomed from the outset. As soon as the company started working, people appeared armed with title deeds just granted by the Minister of Agriculture. The company made the mistake of taking the law into its own hands; it turned out the people instead of appealing to the Government. The muddle that followed was increased with time, and only after prolonged and painful litigation was it resolved. The company failed, but not before it had made the fortune of a number of concessionaires.

Originally it was intended to extend the Rangsit system to cover the whole central plain, but in a few years what had already been done proved to be unscientific. Since nothing had been evolved to counteract the caprices of the rainfall, the rapid silting up of the new canals soon rendered quite inaccessible the 350,000 acres of first-rate rice land that they were supposed to have opened up. The undesirability of canal irrigation was the conclusion that materialized from the long discussions of the increasingly unsatisfactory Rangsit system.

Yet works of conservation—locks, sluices, and *klongs*—for the retention of water and the drainage of rice fields had potential

utility; for not a season passed without demands being made to the Government from all parts of the country for pumps and for aid in constructing dams. But these had only emergency value; and the need for supplementary, artificial means of conservation by irrigation was recognized. The Government therefore called in a European expert to deal with the problem. This expert, a Dutchman named Homan van der Heide, came to Siam from Java in 1899 and remained there till 1909. He succeeded in endowing the southern central plain with a fine irrigation system; but the expenditure alarmed the Government, and the rest of his program was not carried out.

The harvest of 1912-13 was very bad; and the problem of irrigation, long in abeyance, began again to occupy official attention, especially after the appointment of Prince Rabi as Minister of Agriculture. In Chiangmai particularly, local irrigation works could not be delayed much longer if the people were to be kept on the land. An English expert from India, Sir Thomas Ward, was induced to come to Siam, where he traveled extensively in the fall of 1913. Simultaneously steps were taken to form an Irrigation Department in preparation for the time when construction would begin.

Ward's scheme was very comprehensive.<sup>21</sup> It proposed the irrigation of six areas over a long period of time and involved the expenditure of Tcs. 150,000,000, to be spent only as Siam acquired a population sufficiently numerous to occupy all the land thus made available. The projects, which were ranked according to their urgency, consisted of Subhan, Bejaburi, and Prasak Canals, the hill irrigation schemes in Bayabh Circle, and other works in the central plain from Ayuthia to the sea. Auxiliary suggestions included the improvement and extension of the potable water supply and a cooperative scheme for extending credit to indebted farmers.

Exactly contrary to Ward's advice, the Rangsit scheme, which he had relegated to the last because it would not pay, was the first tackled. Work on the Prasak Canal barrage at Rangsit was begun in 1916 and completed in 1922. In the carrying out of this scheme due provision was made for navigation; and though this added greatly to the cost, it was essential in a region practically without

roads. Deficient local labor and unfortunate experience with the expensive Chinese labor, which had been imported for railroad construction, made it indispensable to use machinery as far as possible.

The expenditure of Tcs. 15,780,768 on this scheme was not followed by a marked increase in the amount of rice exported. Water was supplied to some 600 square miles of the richest land in the country, and thirty-five rice mills came into operation where only two had existed before the work was begun. But the population also was increasing at a very rapid rate, and the Rangsit system deprived part of the land around Ayuthia of the water necessary for its crop. Nor did many of the holdings around Rangsit benefit from it because landlords and tenants could not agree as to which of them were responsible for the last step in preparing the fields to receive and retain the irrigation water. All of this discouraged many Siamese from undertaking further irrigation projects; others, however, maintained that the remedy was more rather than less irrigation. By the time the revolution occurred, a total of about Tcs. 34,000,000 had been spent on irrigation since 1913. Sanctions were accorded to a few more schemes, but actually the budget appropriation in 1932 was little more than enough to meet maintenance costs.<sup>22</sup>

The Jiengrak and Bang Hia Drainage was a complementary plan to the Prasak South Canal, which was completed at the end of 1932. Its object was to link into one system all the different works accomplished up to that time for navigation, drainage, and irrigation, in the region bounded on the north by the Prasak River and on the south by the Gulf of Siam. The most interesting feature of this work was the construction of a dike for fifty-two kilometers along the coast to keep out the periodic tidal inundations from the sea. The total area thus projected and irrigated amounted to about 1,333,000 acres, and the work was accomplished at a cost of about Tcs. 9,000,000.

In 1927 the Subhan River Project, to which Ward had given priority, was undertaken in sections because of its expense. The chief objective was the canalization of 123 kilometers of the Menam's main branch, which had been silting up in recent years. This project was as important from the point of navigation as of

irrigation, since for most of the year this region had no transport facilities other than rough jungle tracks.

Irrigation in the northern provinces, which was part of Ward's scheme to meet a need that was urgent in 1913, has not yet got really under way. In 1930 Tcs. 2,000,000 was allotted for irrigation works in the provinces of Chiengmai and Lampang. Differences between the northern and central irrigation problems are due not only to the nature of the terrain and climate but also to the varying attitudes of the people. The farmer in the central plain is not wholly dependent on irrigation as is the northern rice grower, and he will not pay for water that he feels should be as free as sunshine. But northern peasants are willing to pay irrigation rates. The natural temptation to construct here first was offset by the realization that the results would be nothing like so remunerative as in the central plain.

The first work to be completed was the Me Faek Canal in the Chiengmai plain, which irrigates about 68,000 *rai* of land, a third of which is virgin jungle. An irrigation canal along the same principles is under construction from the Me Wang in the Lampang plain, which has never been able to grow sufficient rice and still depends on imports from Chiengrai, where water conditions are more favorable. The new work is designed to make this province self-supporting and may even result in the production of an exportable surplus, the disposal of which will be facilitated by the advent of the railroad.

The device of pumping by mechanical means to help farmers over the dry spells has received increasingly favorable attention from the Irrigation Department. Seven pumping units are now available in case of deficient rainfall, each of which can irrigate an average of 600 *rai* a day. The total area now irrigated covers 20 per cent of all the land under cultivation in Siam.<sup>28</sup>

In the northeast the problem has not been even theoretically tackled. The area adjoining the Mekong, where it flows through the plains, is a great swamp during the rains and a jungle in the dry season. The swamp cannot be utilized for rice growing because the river rises with such force that the rice would be destroyed, and the rapidly retreating waters destroy fish culture in the swamps by leaving insufficient moisture there.<sup>24</sup> Control of the

major channels entering the Mekong is feasible but would be very expensive; it could be made cheaper, however, if the labor were done by the adjacent villages under official supervision. Greater rice production and fish resources could certainly be achieved, and the extension of the railroad would take care of any surplus production. Moreover, one of the great problems of these northeastern villages—the use of their variable swamps—might thereby be resolved. The importance of this problem is shown by the fact that the swamps are used as fishing ponds, as watering places for buffaloes and for the villagers, and as rice fields in the dry season. Government intervention in the form of a swamp survey would at least resolve the perpetual disputes over their fluctuating boundaries.

The preservation of *klongs* outside the irrigation areas is another problem that the Government reluctantly realizes it will have to face. The old law for the conservation of canals, dating from the early nineteenth century, was never generally enforced, even though the Government permitted the use of forced labor to keep them in good condition. Their neglect in the provinces has caused shallowness and obstruction in the *klongs*, and this condition has been aggravated by tin-mining methods and the floods resulting from deforestation. This problem is particularly important in southern Siam, where canals are primarily a means of navigation.<sup>25</sup> So much have the peninsular rivers suffered from the washing of tin ore that the Government now requires a deposit of Tcs. 500 from each concern as a guarantee against river pollution. Drainage of the northern *klongs* would certainly help to keep down malaria and improve the general hygiene, but this scheme is apparently too idealistic as yet to engage serious attention.

The budgetary allotment for irrigation works in 1937-8 was considerably lower than during the preceding years. The Financial Adviser, already concerned about the slow realization of the twenty-four-year-old Ward plan, strongly criticized the further delay. Since the total cost to date, Tcs. 44,900,000, averages the same per acre as in India, Siam cannot be said to have paid an excessive price for her irrigation.<sup>26</sup> Her main mistake has come from measuring the success of irrigation in terms of money alone.

*The Menam Bar and the Port of Bangkok*

Bangkok is situated twenty miles upstream from the mouth of the Menam. At the mouth of the river there is a sandbar, which symbolized old Siam's desire to avoid foreign contacts. Vessels drawing more than 12½ feet of water have always had to discharge their cargoes at Kohsichang, to the profit of a fleet of Bangkok lighters, which until recently have successfully fought every effort to deepen the channel.

When some English merchants offered to dredge a channel through this bar in the 1860's, the king told them that he would not have it done on any account. Another offer was made twenty-five years ago, when the Nord Deutscher Lloyd was the premier shipping firm in the Bangkok trade with regular services to China and the Straits. This company offered to dredge the bar and maintain the channel free of all cost to Siam. This offer was rejected by the Siamese, who said that they would agree to it only if the powers would accept a revision of the import duties, the idea being that the money forthcoming from the increased duties should be devoted to the cost of digging and maintaining a good depth of water. Since then the import duties have been increased steadily enough, but the bar has remained.

Talk of this scheme continued for years, and the question became more important with the growth of Siam's trade. On the eve of the revolution the Government published in the Official Gazette its intention of dredging the bar. The cost of lighterage from Kohsichang to Bangkok, Tcs. 1.25 per ton, was almost as high as the cost of transit through the Suez Canal.<sup>27</sup> This additional charge was a handicap to Siamese rice farmers in competing with other countries. If the bar were dredged, not only would Bangkok become more important; but some of these expenses would be eliminated. The inconvenience to shipping was such that 40 per cent of all Siam's imports had to be lightered over the bar, and in 1932 the lighterage of imports and exports cost Tcs. 1,118,000.

The old régime had been toying with a number of projects. One called for cutting a channel through the bar, a second for a longer deep-water canal, and still another for improving the port of Bangkok. Prince Sakol and Phya Rajawangsan were the two



men chiefly interested in these schemes. Prince Sakol's interest grew out of a public health project to utilize the earth excavated at the bar for filling in the low land around the capital. He was sent abroad to make a special study, but the scheme he presented to the Minister of the Interior on his return merely served to delay the original project to dredge the bar. Active opposition was added to the forces of inertia. The gardeners who lived on the west bank vehemently declared that if more sea water were admitted into the river it would ruin their crops. The depression once more revived the question; it was hoped that the removal of the bar would also remove some of the shackles then binding Bangkok's trade.

A commission appointed in 1932 approved a trial dredging that would involve an expenditure of half a million ticals. To this there was very serious opposition. To silence those objectors who claimed that the Menam was becoming more and more saline, Siam applied to the League of Nations for technical advice. A Dutch expert, G. P. Nijhoff, was sent to study the problem on the spot. His report showed that he could find no serious obstacles to the scheme. On the contrary, he thought that it would involve a saving of about Tcs. 10,000,000 a year and that the benefits, both direct and indirect, would be on a remunerative scale rarely found in public works.<sup>28</sup> Though the project would cost Tcs. 20,000,000, the direct benefits would largely cover the cost; and the indirect benefits would cover it three times. Among the latter he mentioned the modernization of Bangkok, the development of Siam's rice market and its transfer to Bangkok from Singapore, a reduction in transport charges that would in turn lower the price of products, and finally the stimulation of the tourist trade. Among direct benefits, Nijhoff cited the income that could be derived from a compulsory pilotage service and from the wharf charges that would follow upon the Government's construction of a modern port. He pointed out that fruit trees and gardens would suffer no damage since only the natural channel would be deepened and the whole bar would not be removed.

The Government considered this report so important that it spent Tcs. 30,000 on publicizing it. But it aroused little enthusiasm throughout Siam. Many felt that they would never live to see the

day when it would be completed; the Assembly was alarmed at the large sums involved and not wholly reassured about the saline danger to Bangkok's gardens. Foreigners also put in their oar. The port, they said, was a useless expenditure since rice markets were shrinking, alternative crops had not been successfully developed, and freight rates were still adverse. Nevertheless, the Government was convinced by Nijhoff that the scheme would be an essential improvement and would place Bangkok on an equal footing with competing ports like Saigon.

The port of Bangkok was badly equipped. It lacked public quays, warehouses, and mechanical apparatus; and the absence of a direct connection between the railways and the shipping entailed a costly and unnecessary handling of cargoes. The faulty organization of the port, in addition to the inadequate depth of the bar, involved an annual loss of Tcs. 3,725,000 and an indirect loss of about Tcs. 5,000,000.<sup>29</sup>

The old port had an interesting history, which revolved around a famous arbitration case. Originally the Bangkok Dock Company acquired the contract to construct a dock for the first royal yacht. Delays attended its construction, and the navy ultimately declined to pay the cost on the ground that it had not been built according to terms. Interminable negotiations followed with the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, which had financed the work. Eventually the navy had to pay up, but in partial compensation it enjoyed the use of the dock for thirty years.

The first step taken in the port scheme was popular with the Siamese and alarming to foreigners. Pilotage was made compulsory, and fees were established for this service. This meant the end of the seventy-year-old monopoly that foreign pilots had heretofore enjoyed. The first set of pilot regulations, which had been approved as indispensable by all the foreign consuls, had been laid down by the pilots themselves, as well as the rates that they were to be paid. A Pilots' Court had been set up, and a Pilots' Association had been recognized by the Government. With the introduction of compulsory pilotage, fees were raised; and the pilots were placed under the Harbor Association, which promised to give preference to candidates from the Siamese navy. Shipping companies were very much disturbed by the prospect of pilotage coming

exclusively into Siamese hands and protested through the Bangkok Chamber of Commerce. But they have had to adapt themselves in this as in other respects to the present policy of substituting Siamese for Europeans wherever possible.

The budget for 1937-38 provided for an initial appropriation of Tcs. 2,924,000 for the new port scheme, and in July 1937 the bill for expropriating the land on which wharves could be constructed was passed by sixty-four votes to three. Most of this sum went towards expropriating the land that had been bought up by speculators, who refused to accept the Government's offers. Much money, time, and energy were wasted in the ensuing arbitration; and to date a little over half the plots have been acquired. The contract to build the first part of the new dock was awarded to the firm of Christiani and Nielson after rumors of its concession to Japan had been circulated widely. Some consolation was derived by critics of the scheme from the prospect that the Tcs. 4,000,000 involved would stay largely in the country since Siamese teak and cement were to be used in the construction, and that it would give employment for almost four years to five hundred Siamese laborers.

Recently there has been a move to improve the port of Singora so as to give all-year access to the Inland Sea; and there has been talk of another scheme to establish a port on the Indian Ocean, probably at Krabu. These projects, however, have not got beyond the discussion stage.

### *Water Supply*

When Chulalongkorn made his first trip to Europe, London's street hydrants attracted his attention. His determination to endow Bangkok with a good water system did not go into immediate effect. In 1909 the first appropriation appeared on the budget, and not until November 1914 did Rama VI inaugurate the completed system. The project was one of considerable magnitude. Sixty-two miles of piping were laid to take water all over the capital and to supply 390 street fountains, of which 250 could be converted into fire hydrants as well. The price of supplying water direct to houses was such as to put it beyond the means of the poorer classes,

but the street fountains were free and well located and immediately became very popular.<sup>80</sup>

Up to this time Bangkok had had very poor water resources. Rain water was collected from the roofs to be used during the dry season and was stored by those who had the means to do so. When this rain water gave out, water was taken from the polluted rivers, *klongs*, and ditches. A small private company pumped water direct from the dirtiest part of the river to the Chinese quarter and to the few sections of the town where *klong* water was not easily obtainable.

Among the middle classes the water was clarified, if not purified, by treating it with alum in earthenware jars by a process used in ancient Egypt. Artesian wells supplied comparatively pure water to a few fortunate homes, but the amount was negligible in relation to the needs of the population. Conditions were at their worst during the dry season, when the river water became brackish for several months.

In provincial towns conditions are similar to those prevailing in Bangkok before the installation of the new water supply, except in the south, where the more abundant rains never permit the wells to go entirely dry. Wells in the south are also of a more modern structure. In Puket they are all covered as a means of preventing suicides, as well as for the protection of their contents.

In northeastern Siam the defective structure of wells is largely responsible for the prevalence of yaws, which is primarily caused by lack of good drinking water and of adequate bathing water.<sup>81</sup> In the average inland village water comes from wells that are mere holes no more than a foot deep in the ground. In the wet season the plateau is flooded to the point of checking communications, but in dry weather it is like a bone. A water source survey would be of great help in indicating where new wells might be dug.

In 1930 the Minister of the Interior's decision not to grant concessions to private enterprise for the supply of water in provincial districts was based on the paternalistic tradition. Whatever affected public welfare was so important that it must be reserved for government inactivity. This did not mean, however, that private companies were not selling water at outrageous rates in certain towns

like Korat. The price there varied according to the season, ranging from one *satang* per *barb* (eight gallons) during the rains to twenty-five *satangs* in the dry season. Despite this deplorable situation, the problem of supplying water to Korat was discussed for thirty years before any steps were taken. In June 1933 a British firm began the construction of a municipal water system, at a cost of less than Tcs. 7 per head of the population of 7,770. No free fountain supplies are given, but the rate is only two *satangs* per *barb*. As in Bangkok, the local river water is utilized; but it is supplemented by a number of deep wells.

The Government was stirred to further action by this success. After having been reproached for many years with its failure to tackle the problem of water famine and the resultant poor health conditions, the administration now projected a plan for endowing twenty towns with self-supporting water systems. Schemes drawn up locally were to be examined by the central authorities and, if approved, to be financed jointly by the State and the municipality.<sup>82</sup> A little more than a year later loans were authorized for four municipal systems.

Chiangmai's water system has had a most checkered history. In 1920, at the request of the Viceroy, an American missionary named William Harris drew up a budget for Chiangmai in which public health was given primary consideration among the expenditures. A twelve-year budget was made out for Tcs. 50,000 a year and approved by Bangkok. It produced excellent results in the way of street hygiene and traffic control. Among the budgetary items was a water system, for which the estimate at the time came to over Tcs. 192,000. When the total budget was raised to Tcs. 90,000, the water appropriation increased proportionately. In this way, by 1933, Tcs. 200,000 had been accumulated for this purpose.

At the end of the preceding year another expert had come to make an inspection and had estimated the cost of a water system at Tcs. 300,000. This aroused a serious controversy, and opposition to the whole scheme grew rapidly. Eventually the Government, which had always been against water systems in regions where they were not absolutely essential, undertook to survey the situation

The official adviser, T. W. Hacker, reported that if sales were based on a constant price that people could afford to pay, water systems could be profitably installed throughout the country.<sup>83</sup> A special census for this purpose was taken in each town. It was estimated that a family of six persons needed a minimum of eight gallons of water a day, and three *satangs* was set up as a fair price per *barb*. It was further assumed that only 75 per cent of the families could buy water. With these figures as a basis, municipal water systems have been planned with an initial cost such that the annual fixed charges of interest, amortization, and operating costs, can be paid from the revenue. Pipe distribution will be installed only in the more thickly populated regions; the other districts are to be supplied by tank cart delivery. Street fountains are to be opened at certain hours every day in rotation so as to cut down operating costs. Chiangmai is the first municipality on the agenda, topping the expenditure list at the old figure of Tcs. 300,000.

#### *Post, Telephone, and Telegraph*

Mail routes were in existence when Sukhothai was the capital of Siam, and many of them had been built when the Khmers were rulers of the Thais.<sup>84</sup> When the Thais became independent, they built other routes, but more often waterways, especially after Ayuthia and later Bangkok were constructed on low-lying ground. Trade routes with nearby countries formed the only international means of communication.

Before the establishment of the Post and Telegraph Department, letters were carried by hand. Ordinary correspondence was entrusted to traders who happened to be going to the country concerned, and letters to Europe came to be handled by the British consulate.

Within Siam itself letters were classified as ordinary or urgent. The former were forwarded from one province to another, and the latter were sent by a special messenger, who was provided with the means of conveyance at different stages. When Prince Damrong became Minister of the Interior, each town had regular couriers, who knew the quickest routes to neighboring villages and whose number varied with the importance of the community. Rest houses were kept up by the local people, and these couriers were

treated with great respect. The system was designed primarily for official messages, but merchants could also use it by special arrangement with the runners. The irregularity and inadequacy of this system became more apparent with the development of foreign trade.

In 1881 Chulalongkorn established the Post and Telegraph Department; it was at first under German supervision but was soon taken over by Siamese. Ten years later it was transferred to the Public Works Department at the time when the latter was raised to the status of a Ministry.

The new postal service was treated like a new toy by king and public alike. The lower classes at once discovered in it a heaven-sent means of effectively and safely annoying their superiors by sending vituperative anonymous letters and bundles of trash c.o.d. The upper classes naturally hated it; but as they were slow in retaliating, their attackers soon tired of the sport and allowed the Post Office to resume its normal function. One charming Siamese touch was an attempt to cultivate the taste for letters by placing sandalwood in the bottom of letter boxes to impart a fragrance to the missives. Under Siamese management, however, the Postal Department gradually lost its fine organization and became a model of inefficiency. Almost no stamps were to be had even at the main branch; letters failed to reach their destination; clerks were illiterate; and confusion reigned. Until 1916 the Department ran at a large deficit.

In 1886 a mail line was opened between Chiangmai and Rangoon, and in 1887 Bangkok was joined with Saigon. The next year a parcel post was instituted, and three years later Siam joined the International Postal Convention. The bulk of business grew steadily. The west coast of the peninsula was later served chiefly by the railroad, and the eastern gulf towns were reached by steamers of the Siam Navigation Company. During the war the Siamese postal authorities ceased closing any mails for places abroad and simply forwarded the letters loose to Singapore. Shortly afterwards Singapore refused to accept this responsibility, and Bangkok finally decided to send out mail once a week. During the second year of the war there was a reduction by half in the amount of mail received in Siam from abroad but an increase in the telegraph reve-

nues and international services generally. By 1930 there were 832 post offices in the country, compared with 107 in 1915.

The introduction of a local air mail service in 1922 and of foreign air mail in 1930 gave new cause for complaints about the postal service. For years the erratic retention of foreign parcels at the Bangkok Post Office had been loudly bewailed. Packages from Europe generally took from four to six months to reach their destination, and both letters and parcels went astray or reached addressees very late. The advent of air mails added another element of unreliability. Mailbox thefts could not account for the frequency with which letters went astray. Apparently stamps were either detached by the messengers who posted the letters, or else air mail postage was large enough to tempt the small-salaried postal clerks. The authorities urged the registration of letters, but the public felt that it was already paying quite enough additional postage to be assured integrity of service.

The history of the Siamese telegraph service is equally discouraging. In 1869 Chulalongkorn granted the first concession to an Englishman; and when he failed to start work, the Government decided to build its own lines. In May 1876 a group of fifty-four student engineers laid down the first line to Paknam, and two years later a telegraph line connected Bang-pa-in Palace with Bangkok and was subsequently extended to Ayuthia. These lines were built for official use only.

The famous French explorer, Auguste Pavie, made his début as surveyor of the Saigon-Bangkok line, which in 1883 gave Bangkok her first telegraphic connection with the outside world. That same year the newly founded Post and Telegraph Department projected a telegraphic network through the main towns of Siam, which was to be linked with the international service through Saigon; this was accomplished fifteen years later. In 1884 Bangkok was connected with the Burmese frontier; and at about the same time alternative lines were set up between Bangkok, Penang, and Takuapa, and between Singora and Kedah. Large sums were spent in buying materials from abroad, in making clearings, and in putting up posts. This work was accomplished with a really untrained staff, working almost wholly in jungle land where there were as yet neither roads nor railroad<sup>s</sup>.



The lines were expensive to maintain because of frequent storms, which made them deteriorate rapidly, and because of the damage done to the poles by elephants. Moreover, the whole organization was extremely inefficient. Materials were taken to the place assigned, only to be left there to become rusted or to be stolen. The lack of competent linesmen and the want of care, in addition to natural hazards, made the few wires that were set up useless for half the year. Businessmen complained bitterly about the repeated and lengthy interruptions, especially on the line to the teak capital, Chiangmai; and they were further exasperated when the rates were doubled in 1906. Prince Damrong made valiant efforts to repair the Chiangmai line, but an improvement was not effected until the lines were re-laid along the railroad tracks. In 1938 there were 684 telegraph offices in Siam and lines had been completed to a total length of 8,367,557 kilometers.

Complaints about the postal and telegraph service are mild compared with the irritation caused by Bangkok's telephone system. The telephone was introduced into Bangkok in 1881. At first it was used exclusively by the Department of War, presumably because its members were thought to be the only ones robust enough to wrestle with it. Five years later it was opened to the public. The ensuing fifty-three years of bad service have been successively blamed on electric-light cables, tramways, street traffic the mastication of wires by insects, the monsoon, and the hot weather.

At first it was said that the lines would be re-laid and the instruments cleaned out, and that trained operators who understood English would be installed; but these promised improvements never materialized. Instead, the rates went up. The original charge of Tcs. 5 a month was found to be unremunerative and was raised to Tcs. 10. Thirty years later it became Tcs. 15, and the service was worse than ever despite repeated complaints and as many promises to improve. A telephone service with Singapore was opened in 1935, but the Bangkok public had to be informed of this through the Saigon papers. Services were started with Berlin in 1930 and with London in 1932. The dial system was installed in 1934, and a new disillusionment rapidly ensued. In the telephone directory there were always many incorrect numbers, and the authorities

took the attitude that such errors were not the concern of the Telephone Department.

The Post, Telephone, and Telegraph Department is probably the worst of Siam's public works and is a splendid example of the misallotment of budget funds in modernizing a country. Up to 1914 the Department's deficit was blamed on the bad service and vice versa; but when surplus revenues began coming in, nothing was done to force the service to keep pace with its expanding business. By 1932 the Department was again showing a deficit, and it was decided to raise the rates. No one seemed to think of improving the service as an alternative. Since telegrams are less profitable to the State than they were before the installation of telephones and radios, the staff has been reduced. The raising of the inland postal rates from 2 to 5 *satangs* has meant that rural regions have been deprived of newspapers just when they were beginning to circulate there.

The basic theory seems to be that this Department should bring in revenues that will help balance the budget; and there is little or no idea that it is a public service, which should not be expected to make profits.

#### TOWN AND HOUSE PLANNING

##### *Rural Siam*

Typical Thai villages may consist of anywhere from ten to fifty houses, usually situated on the banks of rivers or canals or near lakes in the plains and plateaux. Irregularly built villages prevail; in the north they are frequently round in shape, constructed by the side of mountain streams and around an open place. Often they are walled in by a bamboo thicket. Almost everywhere permanent villages are characterized by a cluster of surrounding fruit trees.<sup>85</sup>

The size and style of the houses vary considerably, according to the region and to the wealth and cultural level of their inmates. The most imposing and solid structures are found in the north. The lack of building materials in the deforested central plain makes building costs there higher than in the self-sufficing communities.<sup>86</sup> Buildings are rarely bought and sold in rural Siam; and as in the

case of rentals, such transactions as occur usually concern shops and warehouses, especially in the south, where trade is brisker in bulky commodities like rubber and copra that require storage protection. In the commercialized Menam plain, carpenters are often hired; but in the north house-building is a community function.

A house lasts little more than a decade since the tropical climate and termites undermine bamboo more quickly than wood. Houses are built on piles to give the inmates protection against floods and marauders, and the livestock is kept underneath. The average structure is divided into three sections: the main house, in which the bedrooms for the parents and married offspring are marked off by bamboo walls; a small storehouse; and the rice granary, which is usually the most solid part of the building.

There is little furniture. In one corner there is a brick fireplace used for preparing meals; a low table, some earthenware pots, a bamboo basket, a jar for water, and kapok mattresses and mats make up the rest, with perhaps a loom where the women weave cloth out of the cotton grown nearby. There is no surplus linen or clothing to be stored since poverty and climate militate against both possessing and keeping them. The material from which the betel-nut set is made varies with the region and the wealth of its owners; it is either wood, lacquer, or silver. In 1690 Kaempfer described the house of the Barcalon as being filled with pictures of the royal family, while the rest of the furnishings were nothing but nasty dirt and cobwebs.<sup>87</sup> Townsend Harris, on the other hand, reported them generally very neat and far superior to the houses occupied by the same class in India, China, and Malaya.<sup>88</sup> In any case, there was little to distinguish the houses of the rich from those of the poor.

Apart from the *wats*, there is nothing of a settled character about Siamese towns. The Thais were nomads and had little time or inclination for building permanent towns. To this day, the only real city is Bangkok. All the development of agriculture and trade has not made real towns out of the old settlements, which were almost always both administration centers and market places. All towns were the seats of princes, in contrast with those of India and China, and therefore unstable.<sup>89</sup> The town gave its name to the State—Sukhothai, Lopburi, and Ayuthia—and disappeared

with it in the chronic warfare that undermined all the countries of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. The uncertain courses of the rivers on which all these towns were located was a further cause of instability. So vital were these waterways to the rice fields and as a means of transportation that the settlement had to follow the river's inconstant bed. Today one finds a relatively new town on the river a mile or two away from its ruined antecedent.

Historical records show the type of towns planned by the princes of ancient Siam. They constructed square walls in accordance with the needs of their time, which made of the town both royal residence and fortress. The walls and gabled roofs over the gates were of Chinese origin, while the form of the indented battlement was Indian. Such walled towns were called *chieng* or *xieng*, that is, fortress. *Muang* indicates an enclosed settlement, but it may also apply to the rice field in which the town is located. The wall itself is *vieng*, as in the Lao town, Vientiane. Regions exposed to continual attack either by man or beast, such as Chiangmai, built walls all around their rice lands. Korat is a typical example of a market that has developed into a town, but the absence of a river highway has placed the whole commercial district within the walls. This was originally done for protection, but it sometimes had the effect of limiting the town's growth.

In Ayuthia, which is still the largest market in Siam, moored boats form the main shopping street. "Siamese White" declared in the seventeenth century that Ayuthia was indeed large, but there is not enough evidence to estimate the population.

In ancient Siam, legislation regarding housing and its materials was curiously unstable. A wooden structure might be owned by one person, while the land on which it stood was perhaps owned by another because the structure was regarded as easily removable. Brick, stone, and cement buildings later came to have a different status; they had to belong to the same owner as the land on which they were erected.

The modernization of Siam through extensive rail and road building has had an enormous influence on the development of provincial towns. In some cases, as with Chiangmai and Lampang, it has caused a boom. The rise in the local price of rice resulting from its adjustment to the world market was higher than in regions

remote from the railroad; and as the poorest people moved out to take up rice farming near Muang Fang, the percentage of Chinese in these towns increased proportionately to the Lao exodus. All over Siam this has been the modernizing effect of the railroad on provincial towns.

Nakon Patom is an example of a town already famous as a place of pilgrimage, to which the railroad has brought additional prosperity. Kanburi developed as a result of the building of a motor highway to the railroad. Towns along the east coast, such as Singora, Pattani, and Nakon Sritemmerat, apart from their old importance as markets, have acquired new importance through improved communication with the capital. Lampang is the outstanding illustration of a boom town. It lies on the direct line between Chiangmai and Bangkok and is the terminus of the only road that taps the rich region of Chiangrai and Chiangtung. Lampang has the only bank outside Bangkok, which impartially finances the teak and sugar industries and the contraband traffic in opium.

Naturally there were many more towns that found themselves marooned at inconvenient distances from the new stations. But the local authorities did not appreciate their opportunity to create new community centers near the railroads along modern lines. Such plans as were made were poorly executed. Patalung, for instance, was planned as a new city, and the official center was shifted from the Inland Sea to its present site. But since too much land was reserved for official expansion, no residential quarter could possibly develop within the city itself. The difficulty now is how to get rid of some of the public land without open dispute or intensive speculation.

Unfortunately, speculation has accompanied town planning and seriously affected rural land values in regions where railroads or industrial expansion are planned. It is fortunate, however, that this speculation is confined to a very limited area; for the authorities lack the proper legal powers to check it. Land remains the primary Siamese investment and the main index to wealth. The long absence of taxation on land encouraged the ownership of large undeveloped holdings, along with speculation in a limited area. But even during the depression rural land values held up far

better than in Bangkok, where recurrent waves of speculation have played havoc with land values.

### *Bangkok*

Bangkok, which is situated on a flat, alluvial plain, was built on the site of older settlements. Ten thousand Cambodian war prisoners worked to build this city as nearly as possible in the glorious image of Ayuthia.

Although it was Mongkut who built the New Road, Chulalongkorn gave the impetus to modernizing Bangkok. It was he who created, as a sort of royal hobby, boulevards, residential quarters, new palaces, and public buildings. Although his improvements unfortunately effaced much indigenous art and substituted for it a hybrid European architecture of uncompromising ugliness, he did at least attempt to institute something in the way of town planning. However, Siamese and Europeans alike refused to cooperate. It took many fires and the city's phenomenal growth to change the general attitude towards urban planning and legislation.

Ancient Siam was a nation of small householders, and even today a man is contemptuously spoken of by his neighbors if he is not the owner of his house.<sup>40</sup> The first question asked of a prospective bridegroom is whether or not he lives under his own roof, and the rental of even the most luxurious apartment is considered a quite inadequate substitute. Social prestige requires a Siamese to own his house even if it is mortgaged up to the hilt.

Housing is not a middle-class Siamese problem, but it is a very crucial one for the poorer people. In the old days a man was either master or servant, and in the latter case he lived in the master's home. This large household system, which is characteristic of feudalism, the then prevailing cheapness of living, and the perennial retreat offered by the monasteries, placed food and shelter within everyone's easy grasp. With the abolition of slavery and the increased cost of living, the old households broke up; and thousands of former retainers and poor relations found themselves for the first time without assurance of the necessities of life.

Long before this, however, the changing order had created a Siamese version of the Western tenement, the *hong tao*, a familiar eyesore and menace to public health in most Siamese towns. The

expansion of Bangkok in the last decade of the nineteenth century was accompanied by a period of wild speculation. Land values suddenly rose steeply both in the business districts and in the suburbs, which became residences restricted to the wealthy. On the credit side Bangkok gained streets of modern buildings in place of a large number of old shanties; but the old arrangement had at least left much open space where little or none is now left, and there was no better provision for sanitation in the new structures.<sup>41</sup> All these new streets were provided with big fever-breeding drains, which became characteristic of Bangkok; and great holes were dug in vacant lots and filled in with germ-laden garbage. The new "improvements" made the long-felt need of a sanitary system even more imperative.

The *hong tao* was regarded as an excellent investment. The Privy Purse became one of the biggest owners of this type of real estate, as well as of much vacant land in both the city and the suburbs.<sup>42</sup> Detached cottages for families of moderate means were and still are totally lacking. The absence of taxation made it easy to hold property on which cheap buildings could be profitably erected and from which the return was sure; and if not hard pressed for cash, owners cared little whether or not they were sold or rented. This was the chief reason why the House and Land Tax imposed in the last days of the absolute monarchy provoked so much opposition. This tax on real estate amounted to 15 per cent of the annual rental value. Vacant houses were still exempt, however, and only a negligible tax was placed on land not appurtenant to buildings. Although one of the avowed purposes of this law was to bring down the ridiculously high land values in Bangkok, which became more oppressive during the depression and had at all times impeded commercial development, it failed to do so because the Government's main objective was revenue. Land values in the capital collapsed, however, and have been falling ever since.

The lodging of the indigent was nobody's business, and the fact that Bangkok's poor needed better homes at lower rentals aroused the Government not at all. Building regulations were discussed for thirty years before the Government recognized any responsibility in the matter; and when it finally did so, its work was incomplete. Even in the recent Local Government Act housing was omitted

from the items in which the municipalities might interest themselves. The Department of Public Health under Prince Sakol took up housing as a hobby, but it was hard to make other people understand it.

Big fires in Bangkok gave the Government its first chance to introduce town planning, but it was slow to take advantage of it. In the first place, unless the authorities had a project already drawn up, the situation after a fire was too pressing and hard on the dislodged people for the problem to be properly studied and regulations to be strictly carried out. Usually some plan was quickly thrown together, and a law was rushed through to meet the specific situation; but on the whole the new buildings were an improvement, not only in Bangkok but in Paknam, Udaiani, and Ban Pang, which also benefited by the new construction that followed destructive fires. The number and seriousness of Bangkok's fires should have done more to make the Government take preventive measures. When the tramways concession was first granted to the Siam Electric Company, that company undertook fire protection of the buildings along which its lines ran. But the first real improvement came within the fire hydrants that were installed with the new water system in 1914. About seventeen years later the police took over the Siam Electric Company's responsibilities. But for three reigns nothing was done to improve Bangkok's congested areas, notably the Chinese quarter of Sumpeng, which grew steadily worse. Even when solid brick buildings were erected, flimsy inflammable structures were frequently run up beside them, which in the absence of building regulations could not be prevented. Nor were there any regulations dealing with the storing of gasoline or the manufacture of firecrackers.

About 1900 the head of the Bangkok Police expressed the belief that fires occurred usually in substantial brick buildings rather than in flimsy ones because the former were insured.<sup>43</sup> At one time rice-mills seemed peculiarly inflammable; but as their insured value has declined since the depression, fires have now begun to occur in small properties—formerly a very rare occurrence—because those properties are now insured in Bangkok and to a growing extent in the provinces. The police have never disguised their suspicion of arson in the case of most of the bigger fires, from which the insur-



ance losses in the single year 1931 totalled considerably over a million ticals.

European insurance companies have periodically considered closing down in Siam because of these enormous losses. Since 1929 every fire insurance company doing business in the country has had to make a deposit of Tcs. 100,000 with the Government. Four years later it was decided to double the amount, but the statistics that the companies were able to put before the Government cancelled the new ruling. These companies, distributed fairly evenly between Chinese, Japanese, and Europeans, have never been careful enough about gathering data before they insured. But it is hard to get figures; and the police, in spite of their convictions about arson, have never paid any attention to the matter in their crime reports.

In 1909-10 the registration of vital statistics was for the first time made compulsory; and from the data collected Dr. H. C. Highet concluded that the mean density for the whole city, excluding the floating population, was only 78 per *rai* in Phya Thai district and 126.7 per *rai* in the heart of Sampeng.<sup>44</sup> Ten years later Dr. Mendelson, the medical officer, complained that the area over which his bureau attempted to exercise sanitary control was ridiculously small. Attap roofage, for example, was outlawed, but only for Bangkok proper. No effective control could be exercised, and the absence of adequate powers in regard to house and town planning was the perennial obstacle to any permanent improvement.

Siam needed zoning laws and other legislation to reduce the number of fires and the excessive insurance rates; for conviction for arson was hard to obtain and the penalties were light. Most of the structures that were being steadily put up as Bangkok expanded were built just as they had been twenty years before. Before 1931 the Government did not even have the power to tear down unsafe or ugly buildings. Such work was left to fires, which curiously enough led to the building of Yomaraaj Road, Songwad Road, and others, as well as to the widening of the New Road. During the depression the best method of disposing of properties was by fire, provided, of course, that they were insured. Owing to police vigilance many attempts at arson failed, but an extraordinary fire in 1931—the largest since 1907—destroyed 300 houses

in Sampeng with insurance losses of Tcs. 643,000. In the following spring a succession of fires resulting in a loss of Tcs. 2,000,000 finally brought about the long-pending introduction of general building legislation.

In April 1934 a general law provided for the control of buildings erected in any burnt-out area. It was laid down that such buildings must be fireproof and sanitary, and that a written authority must be obtained from the Public Works Department if the building was to be over two stories high or used for public entertainments. The provisions for fire protection contained in this law were also applied to buildings already standing. When the Government drafted a law for loans to municipalities in June 1936, it insisted that construction in burnt-out areas should be made in accordance with town planning. The Assembly demurred over the idea of compulsory inspection on such a scale and especially over the employment of a foreign expert, but it finally gave way.<sup>45</sup>

The municipalities have now taken over the work of town planning from the Public Health Department and have also come to realize the difficulties of getting money for this purpose and of securing local cooperation. The Department of Municipal and Public Works is consequently developing a new technique.<sup>46</sup> A rough field study is made of nearly all the towns in the country, and nicely colored plans are drawn up with suggested zoning so simple that any layman could grasp it. These plans are sent out with explanatory notes to the provinces for local reactions, and the bait nearly always catches. A lengthy and often heated correspondence ensues, in the course of which much valuable local information is gleaned. In the end a compromise is reached for each locality, and now there is a skeleton plan for nearly every Siamese town.

More importance is attached to the cooperation of the local people than to the quality of the project. One of the chief difficulties is the desire of nearly every town to become a Siamese Paris overnight and its insistence that the National Treasury provide the money for this purpose. These impetuous communities are informed that, before they begin to try to raise the necessary money, which they must find locally, they must first make a social and physical survey and obtain the legal power to interfere with

individual rights for the public good. Even when this policy has produced no immediate results, it has made Siamese towns plan-conscious. More than ever before the Public Works Department is consulted about the location of markets, halls, and schools. However, the need for experts is still felt, particularly in Bangkok.

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## XVI · FINANCE

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### *Budget*

In the early days Siam's revenues were derived from taxes, tribute, and fines, and only in comparatively recent times from royal trading ventures and the sale of crown lands.<sup>1</sup> Contributions in lieu of personal service became increasingly important in Siam as money payments were more and more favored by the Treasury. Originally such commutation was called *suay* and was designed for persons living in distant regions, for whom contributing paddy was easier and also more useful than any personal services they might render. If they came from regions of rare produce, they might substitute for personal service guano, saltpetre, elephants, or tin. As time went on, rich patrons found that they could utilize their slaves' and clients' entire services by paying the Government periodically what they owed as individuals, on the basis of two to five ticals for every six months' exemption.

The poll tax levied triennially upon the Chinese grew in importance with their increasing numbers; and as in the case of the Siamese exemption fee, it was originally gauged to cover the cost of hiring a substitute. A bracelet stamped with the official seal was the tax receipt. On the whole the Chinese were less heavily taxed than were the Siamese. Their superior industry, as well as their lower standards of living, gave them such an advantage that they eventually gained control of the commerce, tax-farming, and monopolies of the realm.

Ancient Siam had no formal land tax, but an assessment on agricultural produce, which amounted to about 10 per cent on profits, and a tical per *arpent* of land payable at harvest time.<sup>2</sup> At first this tax was levied solely on the cultivated area, but later it was extended to the whole country and came to be called a land tax. In the eighteenth century certain distinctions were made according to differences of terrain and in the water supply; but a

great deal of unfairness in assessment still prevails to this day, and the whole taxation system cries out for revision. At the beginning of every reign a survey was made, picturesquely called "walking in the gardens and fields," on the basis of which garden produce was taxed. The number of trees was counted; their kind and bearing were noted; and without further inspection the assessment was made. New trees might be planted without informing the tax collector; the law only forbade cutting down trees before the general survey. Pepper at first escaped tax-free as the Government was encouraging its cultivation. In addition to produce taxes there were licenses to catch fish and collect forest materials, and in every branch of the revenues there was an increasing tendency to substitute payment in money for payment in kind.

Tribute from the subject States declined in importance as the Thai people became less warlike and the adjacent peoples were more and more absorbed into the Siamese kingdom. Tributary princes paid in one of two ways, and both of them were probably more symbolic than valuable. In theory, the Malay Rajas sent gold and silver trees every three years, but even these were not dispatched when the Siamese king was too weak to enforce payment. Those who paid heavier tribute sent it in the form of materials that the king could use in his commerce, such as ivory, teak, gums, etc.

Royal trading was introduced early in the seventeenth century and progressively paralyzed the country's commerce until it was abolished in the middle of the nineteenth century. It took the form of profits on commerce in certain commodities, the export of which was monopolized. Tin was the first export monopoly, which probably originated in the fear that so valuable a resource might be exported to a point below the Government's own needs. After finding it so profitable, the king added saltpetre, lead, sappan wood, areca, hides, elephants, and later birds' nests, the last of which is still profitably maintained. Still later, cardamoms, gamboge, and pepper were added to the reserved list, as well as certain merchandise, whose import was monopolized for sale at fixed prices. At first foreigners could sell munitions and, temporarily, cloth only to the Government; and the residue, if any, was sold to the public. In the Ayuthian period Siam's royal ships plied back and forth

between Siam, India, China, Java, and Japan, but the results were not always profitable. Revenues from the sale of royal domains were unimportant from the fiscal viewpoint but served partially to defray the expenses of the royal household.

Customs and inland transit dues belonged to that category of revenues that cost more to collect than the sum they yielded to the Treasury. The old customs duties were 3 per cent on imports from ships that called frequently at Ayuthia, and 5 per cent—later raised to 8 per cent—in the case of those that called less regularly. There was also a tax on the ships themselves according to tonnage, which was higher for Europeans than for Asiatics. An export tax existed, but its amount is hard to estimate because it varied with each kind of produce. It is still retained for major exports like rice, teak, tin, and rubber.

Transit duties were introduced in the seventeenth century, and 10 per cent of the merchandise was collected in kind from boats and carts by officials stationed at junctions of the land and water routes. Customs officials, who were not paid by the Government, usually took what they pleased from passing boats as compensation. Sometimes, upon payment of a sufficient sum, boats were allowed to pass without examination; but if a ship attempted to pass without authorization, its master was liable to imprisonment and a heavy fine. (Twenty-nine of these taxes on articles of necessity were abolished in 1898.) In addition to all of these, King Ekatotsarot in the seventeenth century introduced a shop and market tax in the course of his financial reorganization. This was probably one of the first money taxes in Siam and earned for Ekatotsarot the reputation of being an avaricious man.<sup>8</sup> It was collected only near the capital and in the market centers.

Half of the judicial fees and fines and all of a criminal's confiscated property formed a considerable addition to the State's revenues. Lawsuits were also an important source of income since they were interminable; and confiscations, though infrequent, were substantial since they included the entire fortune and property of the delinquent's family. In addition, there were irregular gifts to the king from officials and princes and extraordinary levies for special items, such as the despatch of ambassadors and public works. Officials and monks were exempted from taxation. At the end of

the Ayuthian period, when as many sources of income as possible had been commuted to money payments, the cash revenues of Siam probably did not exceed a million ticals.<sup>4</sup>

The principle of royal expenditures was quite different from what it is today. Probably Tcs. 50,000 was spent annually by the king on monks of the royal temples, largely for ceremonials. Another considerable item was the bounty showered upon those who had rendered important services. The Siamese glorification of religion above everything else permitted not only the diversion from productive activities of an important percentage of manpower but also a disproportionate expenditure of the national wealth on embellishing and constructing temples and supporting their inmates. So concentrated was this display of riches that foreign visitors formed quite an erroneous estimate of the country's resources.<sup>5</sup> Nature provided abundantly for daily necessities; and it never occurred to the Siamese kings, before Mongkut, that they had any economic obligations to their subjects, for whom it was regarded as a privilege to contribute to the greater glory of Church and State. Royal cremations and other ceremonials probably accounted for Tcs. 320,000 annually—almost as much as was spent on wars or the suppression of rebellions. Money revenues, however, were small when compared with labor services, which were the State's greatest single resource. In 1822 Crawford reported that the budget nearly balanced and that over and above the Tcs. 240,000 in the Treasury there were some Spanish dollars and Chinese silver coins.<sup>6</sup>

The farming out of taxes was introduced into Siam thanks to an English ambassador, who insinuated in the early nineteenth century that it was unworthy of a king to stoop to trade or to the collection of taxes except through monopolies. This had a most unfortunate effect, especially as it led to an increase in the number of taxes farmed out. The Chinese who replaced the royal officials were more cruel and drastic in their profiteering methods. Not only was the word for taxation sinicized, but new forms of taxation were introduced from China on gambling houses and lotteries.

Before they were abolished by the Bowring Treaty, the monopolies consisted of pepper, sapan and rosewood, salt, coconut and other oils, tobacco, betel, sugar, and fish. After these were abol-

ished, the Siamese still had to find compensation from other sources. This, in turn, led foreigners to say unjustly that Siam seemed to care little where her revenues came from provided they were sufficiently abundant and regular.<sup>7</sup> For years the greater part of her revenues came from farms on opium, gambling, and spirits; and even more than their amount, the method of their assessment and collection was the subject of complaint. The agents of the farms were needlessly irritating and tactless in their procedure, and the whole system led inevitably to widespread dishonesty and oppression.

Farms were not entirely responsible for the degeneration of the revenue system, which was also due to the fact that it was split up among different departments, each of which had its own treasurer and legal powers to enforce collection. The Provincial Governments were always struggling with the Central Government; and they succeeded in keeping little of the local revenues, particularly after the Phraklang became Minister of the Treasury as well as of Foreign Affairs in the seventeenth century. First he extended his power outside the capital by assuming control over the commutation of personal service and provincial transit dues. But his department thus became so overworked that he let other *krams* of the central government assume financial functions. In addition to these departments, the tax farmers had their own staffs, which were only nominally under government supervision; and all had ample opportunities to enrich themselves. The whole system was infinitely cumbersome, inefficient, and corrupt, despite legislative measures that tried to circumvent abuse of power by minutely prescribed penalties.

In 1892 Chulalongkorn swept away the whole system and reorganized it on the western model. To effect this he applied to Lord Cromer, who recommended appointing Mitchell Innis as Financial Adviser. His work was continued by other Englishmen, first Rivett-Carnac of the Indian Civil Service, and later Mr. Williamson. David Williams was also lent to reorganize the Siam Customs Department, but the unwillingness of the Siamese officials to execute his reforms had the effect of neutralizing them.<sup>8</sup> However, a regular budget was instituted; officials were paid fixed salaries; and the tax farms were abolished. The king's personal expenses



were separated from state expenditures, but this was largely theoretical. In 1901, despite the Treasury's depleted condition, Chulalongkorn took from it half a million ticals for a pleasure trip to Java.

That same year the Government mustered enough courage to publish its budget for the first time. It was no surprise to learn therefrom that the railroads had cost more than they should have, but the official admission of this mistake was an innovation. The vital point was that it showed the revenues to be elastic, and that increased efficiency in collecting revenues and administering taxes could within two years increase the State's resources by 30 per cent without recourse to new taxation. A lower yield from the Gaming Farm was compensated by an increase in the rice tax, which was made possible by the greater prosperity of the people. Expenditure had been kept so well within revenue that the reserve fund grew from Tcs. 7,500,000 in 1894 to Tcs. 32,000,000 in 1901. The soundness of her financial position enabled Siam to raise foreign loans at discreet intervals without succumbing to foreign domination as a consequence of her inability to pay them back.

The rate of expansion could hardly be maintained indefinitely, however; for within twelve years revenues had increased three-fold. When the budget was first published, many persons were struck by the smallness of the figures and thought that there must be some important leakage in the provinces.<sup>9</sup> It was hard to imagine what the revenues of the country must formerly have been like. Whatever figures had survived were frankly approximate, but at least they were given by persons in a position to estimate the margin of their error. In 1822 Crawford had put the total at Tcs. 24,000,000, and in 1849 Malloch had estimated it at Tcs. 33,000,000. Bowring, quoting Pallegoix, thought it about Tcs. 27,000,000. The revenue of Tcs. 33,000,000 for 1901 was not so far off these estimates. A further surprise was to find that even the outlying provinces were contributing to the general budget, except in the northeast, where the population was very sparse.

### *Tariff*

The foreign treaties, dating from 1855, which released commerce and destroyed the monopolies, nevertheless so limited Siam's

tariff rate that she was forced to make good her loss of revenue in other ways. Before the Bowring Treaty, Siam's fiscal autonomy had in no way been impaired. In 1855 Great Britain, followed by the other treaty powers, put opium, which had formerly been prohibited, and bullion on the free list and limited to 3 per cent *ad valorem* the duty assessable on all other imports. All exports were to be subject to only one duty, which was rigidly fixed by the schedules attached to the treaties. In case of dispute as to the value of imports, Siamese officials were deprived of the final voice and had to submit to the foreign consul's decision.

The tax upon land held by British and other treaty power subjects was limited to a scheduled rate, and no additional charge of any kind could be levied on them unless sanctioned by both Governments. These treaties raised the cost of living in Siam and also throttled native industries since foreign manufactures could be sold cheaper in Siam than goods made in Bangkok. The Siamese felt that it was a heavy price to pay for the abolition of the delays, bribes, and illegal fees formerly practised in all ranks of Siamese officialdom. Bishop Pallegoix had remarked that foreign merchants were forced to bring three cargoes to Siam: one of goods to sell, one of gifts, and still another of patience. Now the pendulum had swung far away from a situation wholly to Siam's advantage to one that overwhelmingly favored foreign merchants.

The first modification came in the British treaty of 1883, which provided that the tax on alcoholic beverages should not exceed 10 per cent. Since Great Britain's trade was 87 per cent of the whole, other treaty powers followed the British lead, with the exception of France, which allowed only 8 per cent. A clause had been inserted in the original treaties exempting alcohol from even a 3 per cent duty, with the result that not only did liquor from Europe enter virtually free but also a specially poisonous Chinese brand. The results had proved to be so demoralizing that the king sent a Siamese Minister abroad to get the powers' consent to Siam's resumption of liquor control. So strongly did the king feel that he was determined, if necessary, to cancel every treaty and start negotiations afresh with that as the one essential condition.<sup>10</sup>

The Siamese mission found it no easy task to obtain justice for a small country thousands of miles away, but it finally won its

point. This victory was followed by another in 1887, when it was admitted that British subjects should be placed under Siamese jurisdiction in regard to the manufacture, sale, and use of opium. In 1909 another treaty with Great Britain provided that the restriction upon the land tax rates should be completely abolished and that British persons and properties should be subject to all taxes not exceeding the rate paid by Siamese subjects. The Chinese continued to escape the poll tax through registration at foreign consulates until the treaties of 1907 and 1909 put an end to this fiscal abuse of extraterritoriality.

As the years passed and Siam's trade grew, the inelasticity of her tariff was such that the revenues showed no corresponding increase. Moreover, national pride was irritated by the limitations imposed upon her fiscal sovereignty, to which she attributed the failure of her own people to develop any aptitude for commerce and industry, and by the necessity of depending primarily on agricultural taxes and of raising two foreign loans. Moreover, the revenue problem was tied up with that of curtailing gaming and opium smoking. Eventually the powers, led by the United States in 1920, surrendered fiscal control, with a few unimportant and temporary exceptions; and in 1927 Siam was at last free to revise her tariff.

Specific duties were now placed on a number of articles, such as matches, kerosene, cigarettes, and sugar, which were selected because they were of such wide consumption that a fairly low rate of duty would yield substantial revenues. Some articles of no importance as revenue-producers were entirely duty-exempt. As to the rest, a general 5 per cent *ad valorem* duty was imposed, and the tax on spirits was materially increased to 12 per cent. With the exception of rice, all export taxes were abolished, as were the remaining inland transit dues, although they were retained for tin and teak under the name of royalties. The export of opium, silver coins, drugs, and *objets d'art* was forbidden. The Government's expectation of a large increase in revenue was not disappointed; in one year it expanded 86 per cent and the excise revenue 12 per cent. Until the depression set in, the new tariff seemed to have supplied the elasticity needed in the country's revenues, as was shown by their steady growth.

Satisfaction over the new tariff came to an abrupt end in 1931 when the Government introduced a totally new schedule of duties. It was understandable that the State required more revenues during the depression and had therefore raised the duties, but the way in which it was done was psychologically bad.<sup>11</sup> Out of a clear sky came a pamphlet from the Customs Department materially increasing the cost of living for everyone in Siam, without a single syllable of official elucidation. Naturally people preferred having their bills itemized and felt that, since the Government had always been financially sound, such a sudden rise was unjustified. It seemed curious, for example, that the Government should have struck a blow at the local cigarette industry, placed higher duties on certain airplane materials of which it was the principal user, and put children's tricycles in the category of motor vehicles.

In February 1932 the financial situation became such that the Government, in panic, once more raised the tariff on all goods except those still restricted by treaty. As a result, some articles rose from 5 per cent to as much as 20 per cent in a month. Port dues, land and house taxes, and the excise duty on matches and cement were all increased. This was but part and parcel of a general economy move. Hundreds of civil and military officials were retired, and 5 per cent was deducted from the salaries of those remaining.

Nor did such drastic measures succeed in balancing the budget. Moreover, some of the new duties were blamed for having precipitated disaster for some of those local industries whose prosperity they had been designed to encourage. Bangkok's tobacco factories, for example, were closed down because of the prohibitive duty on the foreign tobacco leaf imports that were mixed with the Siamese product; it now became cheaper and easier to import foreign cigarettes. A curious result of this tariff was the contemplated transfer of one factory to Hongkong since products from there could be sold cheaper to Bangkok than the article manufactured in the capital itself.<sup>12</sup> Local soap and perfume makers also found that it cost more to produce in Siam than to import the finished product from abroad in addition to paying the freight and duties.

*Taxes*

Revision of the taxation system did not keep pace with the tariff changes, possibly because it lacked the irritating incentive of foreign treaty obligations. Revenue from taxation in 1896 was Tcs. 6,501,632, or 79.93 per cent of the whole; and in 1926 it amounted to Tcs. 65,073,703, or 69.23 per cent of the whole. The first Financial Adviser laid down the policy of a more efficient and equitable collection of taxes without increase in rates. The tax on rice land, which had always been a very important source of revenue, came to occupy the outstanding place on the budget; and this automatically localized most of the tax-paying in the rice-exporting central provinces. Difficulties in the way of securing more than a fraction of what this tax should have yielded were at least partially overcome by an Act of November 1900, which regulated its collection. This law was the result of a lengthy study of the mass of rulings and ordinances that with time had come to obscure the law of custom upon which they were founded. The result was a legal simplification of existing laws and marked no new departure.

The same could be said of the ruling that provided for the issue of tax receipts to eliminate several payments on the same goods. Formerly a fisherman had to pay a tax to the farmer when he brought his catch ashore, another to the official when taking it to market, and another for the use of the stall. But whatever may have been the fault of Siam's old tax system, many articles in the market paid no duty at all; and others never paid more than once—and that a moderate sum.

In Bangkok, foreigners and educated Siamese frequently expressed surprise at the lightness of the country's taxation.<sup>13</sup> But too often they forgot to balance this against the deficiency of public works in the provinces, where the people had to pay locally for whatever was done. In most of Siam, outside the rice-exporting provinces, the average villager had no source of money income. A good harvest gave him plenty to eat, but few farmers raised anything to sell. Those villages that paid a teacher Tcs. 3 a month found it a big sum to raise. For that reason even the small poll tax,

averaging Tcs. 4 a head, and the modest rice land tax constituted heavy imposts for the self-sufficing areas.

Not until just before the war was it officially admitted that a good many *monthons* never got adequate returns on the taxes they paid with such difficulty. It was an old grievance, but only in the last decade of the absolute monarchy did it enter into practical politics. Proposals to make the poll tax payable by those in government service seemed radical from the viewpoint of Siamese tradition but did not go far to redress more fundamental fiscal wrongs.<sup>14</sup> The Siamese comforted themselves with the theory that taxes were adjusted to the districts' resources, but in reality they fell most heavily on the farmer-producer class, and lightest on the well-to-do.

Just before the depression the various forms of direct taxation amounted to 7 per cent of all expenditures in the central provinces and 5 per cent in the rest of the country.<sup>15</sup> This represented an average expenditure per family of Tcs. 27 in the center, Tcs. 9 in the north, Tcs. 7 in the south, and Tcs. 4 in the northeast. On the other hand, the poll tax in relation to other taxes increased from 15 per cent in the center to 85 per cent in the northeast. As most of the taxes were derived from the center, the blow to commercial agriculture dealt by the depression shattered the Government's income. The necessity for a more diversified taxation, especially of non-agricultural populations, was driven home as indispensable to stabilizing the budget. From his data, Zimmerman selected the export tax on paddy, which fell on nearly all the peasants through a differential between the internal and the world price of paddy, as being particularly noxious in that it reduced the sale price without adding proportionately to the State's revenues. He found that slaughter fees also adversely affected the farmer's income by reducing the price that he received for his animals. For many reasons, profits from most agricultural enterprises were virtually nil, but they could be increased by creating more enterprises and consequently higher incomes; capital could also be built up by encouraging habits of thrift.

As the budgetary deficit grew, the Government naturally toyed with the idea of further taxation. In some cases the vernacu-

lar press was radical enough to suggest an income tax, or even a tax on land. In 1928 the first such tax had come into force, but it applied only to a narrow strip of land near the new resort of Hua Hin. But those who foresaw further revenues from this untapped source of income were disappointed. Such taxes were impossible to establish under the absolute monarchy because of the opposition of high government officials, who were themselves the country's large landowners. Moreover, it would take a long time to build up machinery for an income tax. The absence of a middle class had never before been acutely felt. It was obvious that the class that had been bearing the chief burden of taxation could do so no more.

Agitation for tax reform grew with the depression, but the Government refused to face the issue squarely. The king virtually apologized to the officers of the army and navy when he told them it was impossible to increase the taxation of the poor; he further said that taxing the rich would probably be inadequate and certainly impolitic. Trade, too, would be hurt since then there would be no one to buy goods; and in any case, he concluded, there was little real wealth in the country.

Even if we should collect all the monies of the rich people in Siam and essay to divide these out, still not many would be enriched . . . the excess taxing of the rich may possibly bring bad results.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately for Prajadhipok, his Government decided to tax the white collar class. Just before doing so, however, it reduced the paddy-land tax by 20 per cent. Quite a large group in Siam advocated depreciating the currency and making a bigger cut in expenditure as the best means of balancing the budget.

Official attempts at economy dated back at least a decade. In the summer of 1922 the Minister of Finance, Prince Chandaburi, had formally resigned owing to his inability to check royal extravagance; and at the time his decision was regretted by public-spirited Siamese and foreigners alike. The king, realizing that Chandaburi enjoyed the confidence of foreign bankers, refused to accept his resignation; but he did little to render his continued status as Minister less anomalous. A Treasury Commission was set up to regulate official expenditure, but it was primarily designed to cur-

tail the functions of the Minister of Finance. Nor did the commission's membership foreshadow any stringent economies in future appropriations, in spite of the bad economic conditions then prevailing.

Extravagance continued unchecked, with the result that two successive loans at high rates had to be raised abroad. Siam's reputation in the London market had always been high, but it was then felt that the limit of expansion had been reached in revenue and that expenditure should not be steadily increased in the absence of further taxation. Army, navy, and aviation—the king's pet services—absorbed 28 per cent of the budget; and the cost of additional works was a source of anxiety to the administration. The banks then existing in Siam did very little towards developing the land. Such private capital as existed was quite unproductive.

Prajadhipok's accession coincided with the abolition of old treaty rights and the increase of revenues derived from the new tariff. He also effected serious economies in the public services. About six hundred functionaries were obliged to retire, and the number of *monthons* was profitably reduced. Simultaneously there was a money reform. By the Currency Act of 1928 the tical was defined no longer in terms of sterling but in relation to gold, and the resulting stability was beneficial to the country. By 1930 the civil administration absorbed 19.9 per cent of the whole budget; agriculture and commerce, 20.7 per cent; public health, 3.5 per cent; defense, 22.3 per cent; justice, 16.2 per cent; education and religion, 7.5 per cent; and the diplomatic service, 9.8 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of Prajadhipok's drastic economies, there was a progressive shrinkage in the revenues as a result of the fall in world prices. A government communiqué issued in April 1932 took the public into official confidence as regards the country's finances. Revenues in 1929–30 had come to Tcs. 107,000,000; the next year they had slumped to Tcs. 96,000,000; and for 1932–33 the estimate had fallen once more to Tcs. 74,800,000. A drop of Tcs. 32,000,000 in three years called for radical measures. In 1931 a mild cut had been made in the salaries of higher officials, and the king had himself offered to reduce the civil list by a million ticals. In 1932 the king once more cut the civil list by Tcs. 800,000 to counteract the 20 per cent reduction in the paddy land tax, and appropriations



for agricultural research and education were also reduced. In spite of all these efforts, however, the fiscal year ending March 1932 revealed a deficit of about Tcs. 10,000,000.

In April 1932 a tax was imposed on all salaries above Tcs. 600 a year. This fell hardest on the small-salaried intelligentsia and brought home to everyone the seriousness of the Government's financial plight. Heretofore Siam had had little experience of direct taxation; the land produce tax was modest and the poll tax small, falling alike on rich and poor. No real attempt had been made to enforce an income tax, and the unfairness of placing the burden principally on the salary-earning class, while the rich escaped along with the very poor, was only too obvious. The Government was not brave enough to lay hands on the Siamese nobility or the Chinese merchants. It was content to take easy money where there was no danger of serious resistance. However, some of the storm of criticism that the salaries tax had aroused was stilled a few days later by the announcement that a house and land tax was to be levied on the property-owners and the merchant class.

The proposed house and land tax hit Siam traditions a square blow. Heretofore the pride of every Siamese had been in the ownership of land. Clerks and government employees, who were already paying a head tax, a salaries tax, and school fees for their children, were now saddled with still another, as well as with the fear of being dispossessed if they defaulted in their payments. Most members of this class could not afford to live outside Bangkok because of transportation charges, but many of them felt they must sell their land at half its value because of the new taxation. Originally they had bought the land to avoid the high rentals that prevailed in Bangkok, and now this class was going to be forced to reduce its standard of living. The house tax started, as did the salaries tax, at an unfairly low level; 15 per cent of the rental value was charged, and for land alone the annual rate was 7 per cent of one-twentieth of the value. However, the whole affair proved to be a tempest in a teapot; for within the year amendments took the teeth out of this novel form of taxation.

Although there had been a feeble cry of "no taxation without representation," it was confined to a few newspaper columns. The

new taxation did not cause the revolution—the civil service in Siam was too accustomed to obeying orders blindly; but it laid a groundwork of discontent that made the revolution more acceptable after it came. World events accelerated the development of Siam's internal crisis. However, by bringing the value of the tical down to sterling level in May 1932, the Government seemed to have checked the unending slump in prices, which was making the farmers' position desperate.

### *Financial Policy of the Constitutional Government*

Early in July the new Government repealed the unpopular new taxes and effected a reduction in others that fell most heavily on the farmer. What remained was hard to collect because the people thought that the revolution meant a general tax amnesty. Moreover, since the old sources of revenue, opium, excise, and customs, had all declined, the State had to institute a few new taxes of its own. Foreign Governments were simultaneously assured that Siam's financial policy would be maintained on a sound basis. The country had no internal debt, and her foreign loans amounted to only £11,000,000. But at the time no one knew the exact situation inasmuch as the Financial Adviser's annual reports had been suspended since 1930. An official statement made in the Senate in July, that Siam was able to meet the deficits of the past two years by means of the Debt Redemption Fund, was widely welcomed. Bullion was then flowing out of the country in such proportions that it had become the second export.

In November the announcement that Siam no longer needed to call on the Redemption Fund, which would be used for its original purpose of refunding the high interest loans of 1922 and 1925, brought home to everyone the soundness of the country's financial position. The revolution, which had affected foreign trade only to the extent of a few days' excitement, followed by a recovery to its former level, had not undermined the country's financial position at all. Yet a vague feeling of uneasiness persisted. Wealthy Siamese cut down their expenditures appreciably, and foreign traders were chary about committing themselves deeply. By the end of September 1932, when it looked as if the market had touched bottom, Siam's financial position had actually improved; but the

foreigner has never recovered his assurance that he will retain his privileged pre-revolutionary position in the country.

The new Government was aided in its determination to avoid a recurrence of the deficits of the preceding two years by an unusually abundant rice harvest in the fall of 1932. Severe cuts were made in functionaries' salaries, and the budget was balanced—on paper. Customs and mines yielded larger revenues to compensate for remission of some of the taxes that had borne heavily on the farmer and for the decline in the excise revenues. In addition, a bank and insurance tax was enacted in August 1932, which brought terror to the foreign community. A tax on net income was not at the time deemed practicable in Siam since most of the institutions were branches of foreign banks. Theoretically, the license system was quite fair as it applied to the resources used in the banking business, namely, the capital employed and the average amount of the deposits. In the case of foreign banks the capital employed was estimated at 25 per cent of the average amount of deposits for the same month. The *Crédit Foncier* had to pay on the amount of money loaned or invested in real estate in Siam.

In its first budget the constitutional régime showed adherence to Siam's traditional policy of cautious finance but with a new appreciation of its dependence on the farming class, whose position was now realized to be economically unsound. Throughout 1932–33 the price of rice kept falling steadily, and farmers' incomes were halved as compared with four years previously. Tax remissions of the preceding year were continued, and the produce tax on land of all kinds was reduced perforce by 50 per cent.

The declining purchasing power of the people was reflected in the diminishing revenues from the excise and poll taxes. In 1919 the latter had yielded Tcs. 9,125,000, and in 1932 it had fallen by Tcs. 2,000,000 in spite of the population's steady growth. The shop and house tax amounted to less than that on forest produce. To balance these losses the king again cut his civil list until it was less than a third of what it had been under Rama VI, and he also contributed Tcs. 200,000 towards primary education to save it from a further cut. New excise duties were placed on matches and cement, and in April 1933 a new tax was imposed on incomes and businesses whose profits were too problematical to justify more

than a very cautious estimate. An internal loan of Tcs. 10,000,000 was floated and taken up in about a week. The most noteworthy change was the growth of over a million ticals in the budget allotment for the Ministry of Defense. This increase was sanctioned by the governments of both Phya Mano and Phya Bahol.

Phya Mano's conservative government rejected Luang Pradit's radical scheme for nationalizing the land, but in April 1933 it imposed a series of new taxes ranging from a stamp duty to assessments on income and business. A general income tax, it was pointed out, was more reasonable than the former salaries tax, which fell on only one kind of income. To avoid the tax evasion that had caused the failure of a similar attempt in the Straits, the taxes on income and on business were to come into effect together. The former was to tax income on the basis of declarations, and the latter on the basis of presumed earnings. The average company did not welcome the provision that it should deduct the income tax from salaries at the time of payment, but by this means the Government hoped to reduce possible evasion to a minimum as well as the cost of collection.

After lengthy consideration it was agreed that incomes above Tcs. 12,000 per annum derived from leasing real estate should pay only a super-tax, and not the additional tax to which arable land was subjected. The same arguments won the day with regard to the imposition of an income tax on rent from properties, which were also subject to the house tax. Companies were liable to an 8 per cent tax simply on the amount of money they paid to their shareholders, as shown by their audited balance sheets. On the other hand, the business tax, which was paid by the rest of the mercantile community, if at all, was assessed on presumed earnings, which were estimated on the basis of the tangible facts of house rent, the capacity of each plant, and the number of employees. Such a rough and ready basis for taxation had the disadvantage of being only an approximation to reality and was inelastically the same for bad as well as good years. For five groups of businesses the rental value of their premises was the deciding factor in assessing the business tax, but in Bangkok rents were highly artificial; and certain businesses, such as pawnshops and antique dealers, were already taxed in the form of fees.

As it has worked out, Occidentals, who are chiefly professional men either in government employ or working in organized companies, have been assessed under the income tax; and the great majority of Orientals, who are engaged in trade, are subject to the business tax, the rates of which are lower. In the absence of accurate data, these assessments are bound to be arbitrary. Industry and commerce in Siam are mostly carried on by individuals or by private partnerships, and only a very few joint stock companies exist. The standard rate of the income tax is 8 per cent; and those persons earning less than Tcs. 2,400 are exempt, while those whose incomes exceed Tcs. 12,000 pay a super-tax. However, the Revenue Code of 1939 has already altered this situation.

These new taxes represented a step towards a more elastic fiscal system; moreover, they were a distinct advance over the salaries tax imposed by the absolute monarchy in that they were apportioned according to capacity to pay. But even so, direct taxation was still too rigid; and its burden was as yet far from equitably distributed. Salaried employees and professional men paid more than the rich merchants who carried on business in their own name; and the most successful businessman paid only a little more than the man whose profits were small.

The budget for 1934-35 was again balanced, and the estimates for the following year showed an interesting refocus of national policy. Credits were expanded for the Publicity Bureau; allotments to the navy were practically doubled; more money was given to highways; the grant for primary education was substantially increased; and government industries were launched, with an 80 per cent subscription of capital funds for the new paper factory. The sum of Tcs. 700,000 was allotted to develop cooperative societies, and nearly that amount for the organization of local government. A surplus of Tcs. 10,000,000 was envisaged, and expenditures were correspondingly increased by Tcs. 2,000,000. Revenues from forest products, the state railways, and the poll tax, fell; income from tin royalties, gaming and lotteries, immigration fees, and the income tax, increased. The income tax had been estimated at Tcs. 500,000, and the sum of Tcs. 680,326 that came in exceeded all expectations. But the banking and insurance tax fell by over Tcs. 60,000 below the estimate of Tcs. 200,000. Busi-

ness and professional taxation yielded about what had been expected—Tcs. 264,990.<sup>18</sup> In a year notable for evasions of direct taxation, lotteries flourished as a popular form of indirect taxation and netted the State 30 per cent of their profits for public works.

The policy of remitting taxation on the produce of land—rice, attap, fruit, sugar cane, and tobacco—was pursued partly because of sheer inability to collect the heavier taxes and partly as a reward to the farmers, who had increased their exportable output in spite of the falling world prices. Good in so far as it went, it left untouched the peasants of the self-sufficing areas, who were having a hard time to pay the paddy-land tax, not to mention the poll tax. Delegations of farmers petitioned the Premier. The Government was asked repeatedly to accept produce in place of money, but this was not permitted since the State was still unwilling to enter trade. However, the administration did delay payments and finally substituted forced labor on highways for poll tax delinquents.

The immigration fee was substantially raised to check the inflow of competing Chinese labor, and a few other gestures were made to relieve the current unemployment. In the Assembly Nai Dong Indra drew a touching picture of the hardships caused by direct taxation in the northeastern provinces.<sup>19</sup> About 70 per cent of them, he said, could eke out a bare living. They were not rebellious to taxation but had sold everything they owned to pay the poll tax. Some even brought Tcs. 3 and a fowl to replace the fourth tical that they could not realize in cash. Was balancing the budget at the cost of so much misery to the poor worth while? It would be far better to tax the rich more heavily. In this sentiment the Assembly heartily concurred. In May 1934 as a sop thrown by the Government to the tax revisionists, a finance committee was appointed to give expert advice on the budget.

The same sentiments lay behind the controversy between the king and the Assembly over the inheritance tax. Prajadhipok felt that the distinction between crown and private property was not clear. By a secret vote the Assembly passed the bill over the king's veto and added an interesting clause limiting to Tcs. 5,000 the exemption allowed for cremation expenses.<sup>20</sup>

One of Siam's biggest needs was to find new sources of revenue; and no one could argue against the principle behind the new

death duties, which were along lines familiar in other countries but only slightly known in Siam. The original idea was to deduct Tcs. 25,000 from every estate and to levy duty on the balance, but by a big majority the Assembly brought down the exemption figure to Tcs. 10,000. No speaker hinted at the possibility that these duties would have to be paid out of capital because of the lack of ready cash in the provinces. Since the greatest part of Siamese capital is invested in land, all or part of it has to be sold to meet the death duties. The result has been a general decline in land values.

The budget for 1935-36 showed that the country's position was sound. Expenditures went up Tcs. 10,000,000, but the number of bankruptcies was smaller; credit and collection were in a better condition than for the preceding four years. Although the position of the farmer was as unsound as ever, the problem was less acute as the price of his produce had improved. The Minister of Finance promised serious measures regarding seed selection and animal husbandry, but nothing was said about the promised silo system or the standardization of grain. The most notable increase in expenditure was Tcs. 4,000,000 for the Ministry of Defense, which brought the appropriation of this Department up to Tcs. 21,000,000. The Ministry of the Interior was next on the list, followed by the Ministry of Public Instruction. Capital expenditure went up to Tcs. 3,400,000, which was to be taken from the Treasury Reserve for public works. Among the latter were such new items as a stadium, government factories, and fuel oil and pilotage development. Cooperative societies maintained their current quota. The civil list was reduced at the king's request, but this was the only item that showed no increase.

The warning uttered by the Financial Adviser, W. A. M. Doll, at the end of 1936 chiefly concerned the Ministry of Defense's continued heavy expenditures, which had grown to the large figure of Tcs. 26,000,000. Doll examined Siam's recent financial policy in the light of the norm set by Sir Edward Cook. That most able of Financial Advisers had laid down three budgetary principles: that Siam should build up a reserve to avoid recourse to foreign loans; that there should be a debt redemption reserve; and that a reserve should be set aside for reducing taxes and duties.

Doll found that the Government had pursued the first two of these policies until 1931-32, when several million ticals had accumulated. The constitutional régime had partially forsaken this policy and used some of this reserve as capital for industrial enterprises, without having engaged the proper experts to assume their control. Cook had indicated other ways of raising revenue by revising the system of taxes and duties and had cited even then the disproportion between the payments of the farmers and of the wealthy. The promulgation of the house and land tax in 1932 seemed to show that the Government had concurred in this suggestion, but that same year the law was amended in such a way that the old policy was resumed and the Treasury lost nearly a million ticals.

It was pointed out by Doll that in Bangkok, which had electricity, town water, and roads, a Siamese living in his own house paid virtually nothing in the way of rates; but that if he resided in a provincial town, which lacked most of the capital's conveniences, he was liable to taxation. Adjustment of this inequity had long been demanded in vain, nor had the Government fulfilled its promise of relieving the farmer by fundamental revision of the tax system. In addition to the State's payments abroad, there were always the Chinese remittances, which added to the general financial instability. A bad rice harvest would be disastrous to Siam's budgetary equilibrium. Most Siamese took this warning as applying to the distant future; the currency situation was still firm as rock and very strongly covered.

The Assembly did not accept the Ministry of Defense's estimate without sharp opposition. It repeatedly voiced the opinion that the farmers were badly treated in comparison with officials and much too highly taxed. In its three years of existence eighteen new taxes had been promulgated and collected. The Government was reminded that for two years it had promised a revision of the taxation system, which was admittedly unfair and out of keeping with its benevolent principles. Although the deputies once more voted a reduction on land produce taxes, they were very vocal in their desire for a fundamental stocktaking and no more makeshift reductions. Officials earning less than Tcs. 2,400 a year were exempted from taxation, but not so the poor farmer, who for



arrears of Tcs. 20 in his taxes had his farm seized and his sole means of livelihood sold at auction.

Not only from the point of view of assessment was taxation open to criticism. The failure to collect the house tax has been a scandal of many years' standing,<sup>21</sup> and the enforcement of the income tax against the Chinese business community is something no government of southeastern Asia has been able to accomplish. The growing nationalism of the Assembly found ample fuel for its indignation in the Chinese remittances to China without any proportionate payment of taxes paid locally on the profits of their trade. The Financial Adviser drew attention to the discrepancy between the growing prosperity of foreign commerce and the stagnancy of the national wealth, and his suggestion that Siam take steps to keep her wealth at home became grist to the nationalist mill.

In April 1936 the tariff was altered for the twelfth time in seven years; the chief change was from *ad valorem* to specific duties. Formerly there were seventy-five main items, of which only twenty remained, partly or wholly, on an *ad valorem* basis. Evasions of duty had been rife under the old system, and in this instance the interests of honest merchants coincided with those of the Crown. Several months before, the Bangkok Chamber of Commerce approached the Customs Department in regard to the false declarations, supported by incorrect invoices, that were becoming very extensive. Under the new system evasion was made difficult; moreover, merchants would know exactly what duty they would have to pay for a large proportion of their imports since it was based on certain ascertainable facts like weight and volume and no longer on value, which was a matter of opinion and open to misrepresentation. On the whole the change has proved to be a stabilizing influence on international commerce.

Luang Pradit was careful to say that the new tariff accorded equal treatment to all nations, and in spite of certain appearances it has worked out that way. The displacement of *ad valorem* by specific duties seemed to be of special advantage to European manufacturers and to deal a hard blow to cheaper Japanese imports, which at the time formed 25 per cent of the whole. Yet the major Japanese imports were cotton and steel goods, which are still

subject to *ad valorem* duties. Unfortunately, however, the main increases fell on certain food articles, gasoline, and cigarettes; and this meant a higher cost of living for the middle income group. Nevertheless, the new tariff had an easy passage through the Assembly.

At the time of the change the public understood that the Government had no desire to increase the tariff and that the new rates would be found to work out about the same as before. The report of the Customs Department for 1936-37, the first report of its kind in Siam, showed that this was not the case. The total gross revenue increased from Tcs. 32,900,000 in 1935-36 to Tcs. 42,000,000 in the next year—or nearly 30 per cent. Of this increase, Tcs. 7,600,000 may be attributed to the increased import duties, 80 per cent of which were collected at the port of Bangkok. The Customs Department did a very useful piece of work in making public the extent and cost of its usefulness. The eradication of tax evasion was estimated to account for about 50 per cent of the increased revenue from imports, Tcs. 2,400,000, which amply justified the change; and the improved administration resulted in a further accretion of Tcs. 1,200,000 revenue. Altogether, Tcs. 3,700,000 fell into the Treasury rather than into the merchants' pockets. However, the amount of contraband seized was disappointingly small and only a fraction of all the merchandise actually smuggled. The gross revenues from the Customs Department in 1938 rose to Tcs. 39,519,438, of which Tcs. 29,120,057 came from import duties and 3,818,330 from export duties. The single item of the tin royalty alone netted Tcs. 5,987,431.

In March 1937 the Assembly in secret session amended certain items on the tariff. This was a tardy though welcome admission that the rates had been too high. Protest at the duty on matches, for example, revealed that the public, under the double burden of the high price and the poor materials used in the domestic article, would turn to other forms of lighting. The same factor led to a reduction of the excise duty on alcohol in areas where illicit distillation flourished. Yet on the whole the new tariff had fulfilled its main function of swelling the revenues. The expenditure in collecting revenue was 1.72 per cent—the lowest on record for

the past eleven years, during which such costs had at one time risen as high as 4.50 per cent. Less than a thousand men are now employed in the Customs Department. A new and welcome publication was the itemized Tariff Guide published in May 1938. In spite of the wretched rice crop of that year, the importance of the Customs Department was reflected in its responsibility for 36 per cent of the State's income.

Since 1937 revenue has exceeded, and expenditure fallen short of, the estimates by considerable amounts. Certain of these revenues are now allocated to municipalities, although the Government has continued to collect them. The net surplus of Tcs. 10,000,000 in 1937 was incorporated into the Treasury. The year 1937 was definitely good for the major exports—rice, rubber, and tin. The Far Eastern conflict, though it temporarily hurt the Chinese market, was not seriously adverse to Siamese trade. Moreover, it gave the Ministry of Defense an excuse for increasing military expenditures. The lengthy budget discussion, in which the Assembly criticized the budget as niggardly towards schemes for economic and educational development, marked an important advance in the Assembly's attitude of independence vis-à-vis the administration. It was even proposed that the Auditor General should be made responsible to the Assembly.

The Assembly's increasingly intransigent attitude found support in the report published by the Financial Adviser for 1937-38. No price, he asserted, was too high to pay in the economic field for the preservation of the nation's solvency. Siam had just reaffirmed her political sovereignty by a series of treaties removing every infringement of her fiscal autonomy. The indispensable condition of political sovereignty was financial independence, without which the former would lose all its substance. Capital expenditures in the last two years had been Tcs. 36,190,000, and for the current year it was estimated at Tcs. 18,550,000—or a total of Tcs. 54,740,000 for three years. Continued expenditure on such a scale would threaten the national solvency and had already reduced the Treasury reserve below the lowest level consistent with the country's fiscal safety. Again he sounded a warning about the lack of national capital and the draining out of the country of the profits of foreign trade and maintained that the country's salvation lay in

the development of the cooperative movement. He emphasized that too much reliance must not be placed on the continued soundness of the currency, and that expenditure must be more productive than it had been in the past few years.

The Treasury of Siam has shown a more consistent continuity of policy than any other Department. At a time when other countries were piling up huge deficits and toying with inflation, the Siam Treasury went on balancing its budget and even amassed a currency reserve in excess of the amount of the fiduciary notes issued. Moreover, it still keeps an unusually large amount of that reserve in liquid form. The soundness of Siam's finances has not been preserved without a struggle, as was evidenced by the substitution of the non-committal term "Special Expenditures" in the 1938 budget for the former phrase "Capital Expenditure." This shows a lack of unity as to policy among Siamese statesmen; moreover, that single indefinite item may be expanded disconcertingly or else be made to fall into a transient and subordinate position.

A sound currency is indispensable to an agricultural country where the State's revenues are from one year to the next dependent on climatic caprices. Revenues depend essentially on the productivity of the peasants and are thus in a fundamentally precarious position, which becomes more or less acute according to the fluctuations of the world market.

The inelasticity of the tax system has worked considerable hardship on the poorest class and has failed to tap such resources as exist. The Government could quite conceivably go bankrupt in the midst of general prosperity since the country's cash reserves are far too small. In 1937-38 the numbers of those in arrears of payment of the poll tax came to between sixty and seventy thousand. The cost of feeding and lodging these people while they were working off back taxes amounted annually to Tcs. 447,000, while the average income from that tax between the beginning of the constitutional régime and 1938 came to Tcs. 6,800,000.

As regards the income and business taxes, the former has been the more productive. When one considers that until 1940 the exemption limit was Tcs. 2,400, and that in 1938 only 2,731 Siamese out of a total population of 14,464,489 paid income tax,

the absence of liquid capital becomes apparent. In 1936-37 the revenues from the income tax were absurdly low—a little more than a seventh of the poll tax. It is obvious, considering the special economy of Siam, that it would be very hard to make such a tax effective; nevertheless, it can be expected to grow appreciably.

In December 1938, in his first speech as Premier, Luang Bipul promised the long awaited readjustment of taxes as soon as substitute revenues could be found. This was effected in the new Revenue Code announced in March 1939, to which a lengthy appendix was added by Luang Pradit, now Minister of Finance. Its best measures are those providing for local improvements and for primary education. The latter entails a cost of 50 *satangs* per person; and if that proves inadequate, the Government will make up the deficit. The head tax and the taxes on paddy, sugar, and tobacco land, and on gardens, are to be abolished; and the only new direct tax imposed is on entertainment, which is expected to bring in a mere Tcs. 100,000. To make good the deficiency of Tcs. 12,598,000 resulting from the abolition of the above direct taxes, the Government is having recourse to indirect taxation and a new customs tariff. The principle of the income tax is new in that everyone is liable. The revenue to be taxed is the net income after deduction of personal expenditure, the rates varying with the amount of income. Thus the rate is 1 per cent for incomes below Tcs. 1,200, while for incomes exceeding Tcs. 2,400 the same rates as before prevail.

### *Currency*

The earliest coins were probably brought into Siam from Burma or India, judging from the Hindu and Buddhist inscriptions that many of them bear.<sup>22</sup> The Thais deserve great credit for this early introduction of a standardized coinage as neither of their highly civilized neighbors, the Khmers or the Chinese, adopted any system of coinage until considerably later. These two peoples either paid in kind, or in gold and silver by weight.

In Central Siam the Thais came to adopt a coin in the shape of a short silver bar with both ends pressed inwards. Each ruler had his own mark imprinted on these coins. Eight varieties of cowrie shells were also used as a medium of exchange for hundreds

of years and remained in common currency along with the bullet tical until Mongkur's reign, when they were both displaced by tin and copper coinage.

The stimulus given to foreign trade by the Bowring-type treaties was such that the existing currency was found to be insufficient. Moreover, counterfeiting was widespread, particularly among the Chinese. Punishment for counterfeiters was severe under Siamese law; but the power of the officials to destroy bad coins had become largely a dead letter, and it was hard for the laymen to distinguish which were counterfeit as there was no way of ringing them. The Financial Adviser, Rivett-Carnac, wanted the banks to be given the power to destroy the counterfeit they received, as the only way to diminish the stock of bad ticals.

For years northern Siam resisted adopting the silver tical. Originally the Lao coinage was of a bracelet type; it was probably introduced about the same time as the bullet variety and was not displaced until the nineteenth century, and then by the rupee and not the tical. Not until June 1934 did the Assembly ask the Government to take steps to stop the circulation of rupees in the north along with silver Siamese coins.

Local preference for the rupee dated back to the early days when the different firms trading between Siam, Burma, and India brought the money received from the sale of Siamese goods to pay the teak coolies in rupees. As soon as the rupee circulated widely, money-changers promptly put up their shops and did a flourishing exchange business. They agreed to buy rupees cheaply and to get them exchanged for Siamese currency at the establishments of the big dealers. The Government requested the Siam Commercial Bank to assist and ordered the different *changwad* treasuries to have ready cash on hand for the exchange since it was obvious that the speculation then going on in exchange worked hardship on the local population. But the government did not use the drastic steps of substitution employed effectively at Puket, and the rupee still flourishes. Moreover, the teak companies have encouraged it in spite of government disapproval as there is much business carried on with Burma.

Mongkur gradually replaced bullet ticals with flat pieces and a bronze coin and issued edicts to enforce the acceptance of foreign

currency. But the people were unwilling to accept the latter, and Mexican dollars had to be stamped with the royal arms so as to give them currency.<sup>23</sup> To remedy the scarcity of money, gold coins were issued; but these met with no more approval. In 1880 Chulalongkorn took the radical step of having his effigy placed on the coinage. Heretofore the Siamese, like so many primitive peoples, felt that in having his likeness made the king was risking his life; and only gradually were they convinced of his immunity. The most serious criticism of the old coinage, next to its counterfeit potentialities, was its cumbersomeness. To get his monthly salary—which was usually in arrears—a European had to take with him much patience and a flock of coolies to help count and carry the bags of steadily depreciating silver.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to silver ticals, legal metallic tender at this time consisted of *sahungs* (quarter ticals), *fuangs* (eighth ticals), and several denominations of bronze coins from the *sik* to the *solot*; there were also nickel coins made up of different numbers of *satangs*. These last mentioned were first issued in 1898 but were never popular. Silver *fuangs*, the bronze and nickel coins, and the bullet tical were all called in in October 1904.<sup>25</sup>

Up to September 1902 the paper money circulating in Siam was almost wholly confined to the issues of the three foreign banks in Bangkok. While these notes were never legal tender and never circulated widely, they were accepted by the people, at least in the capital, and became familiar through their use. When the Government issued its currency notes, which were fully backed by the Treasury reserves, the banks' notes were driven out of circulation and soon entirely disappeared. The original Paper Currency Act provided that not more than 25 per cent of the coin held against the notes in circulation might be invested in securities to be selected by the Ministry of Finance.

Before November 1902 Siam's currency was on a silver basis; and the value of the tical followed the fluctuations of silver, which for many years had been steadily falling. Although revenues were increasing, the purchasing power of the tical was being reduced year by year; and larger sums were being paid for all services and commodities whose value was measured in gold.<sup>26</sup> The only

alternative to increasing taxation was protection of the country's currency.

While Siam's currency was on a silver basis, the rate of exchange was 5 ticals for every 3 Mexican dollars or 7 rupees, as laid down in the Mint Act of 1893. Until about 1871, when silver began to fall, the price of bar silver in the London market remained at about 60d. per standard ounce. The Financial Adviser, seeing the downward movement and its disadvantages for Siam, advised the Government to follow the Indian policy of 1893. This meant closing the mint to the free coinage of silver and placing the coinage on a fixed gold basis. Although the mint was closed that same year, nothing further was done until 1902, when Siam abandoned the silver currency. At this time Siam was considering raising a foreign loan and realized that, if the exchange fell after the loan was made, its repayment would involve a larger number of ticals than the proceeds of the issue represented.

The proposed rate of Tcs. 17 to the pound was soon realized to be too radical a change to make all in one step. It was therefore arranged that the exchange value of the tical would again be made dependent on the price of silver as regards the Singapore dollar, but with two additional advantages not enjoyed before. The Bangkok banks were to judge for themselves when the exchange in Siam was likely to be raised again by keeping in touch with the fluctuations of the Singapore dollar, and in this way sales and purchases could be regulated. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance's declaration that, once the exchange was raised, it would not again be lowered even if silver should fall still further, gave a new element of stability to the situation. Unlike India, on whose system it was based, Siam was able not only to maintain her silver currency for years but even to make twelve upward moves in fifty-eight weeks above the value fixed by law and to benefit greatly by the ensuing stability of exchange. After the world war Siam was one of the few countries to resist depreciation, and in this way the tical won recognition in world exchange as a coinage with a value of its own.

In 1912 the Minister of Finance notified the banks that the exchange rate of the tical would be advanced if the price of the



Singapore dollar rose above 1s.7d., with the result that the tical rose steadily until November 1905, when it reached the rate of 16 to the pound, and again went above that mark in the next two years. This upward movement had been decided upon when it was learned that the Straits dollar would probably not be stabilized as low as 2s. The higher rate gave the tical an exchange value more easily measured against the pound sterling, and one also above its intrinsic value.

It was during the second period of the rising tical, 1906-07, that the first sales of sterling were made to the banks to the amount of £40,000 in order to support exchange at the rates then in force. In October 1906 the first amendment to the Paper Currency Act provided that the invested portion of the reserve, held against the notes in circulation, could be increased from 25 to 50 per cent.

The Gold Standard Act of November 1908 finally crowned the currency policy inaugurated by the Government six years before. During the interval, the exchange value of the tical had been raised by over 50 per cent. The two main provisions of this Act were the introduction of the gold 10 tical piece and the establishment of a Special Reserve Fund to maintain exchange stability between the tical and foreign currencies. This latter provision simply legalized a procedure already in use for some time. About one-third of the 1907 loan had been set aside as a separate fund not to be confused with other Treasury resources. So swiftly did this reserve fund multiply by the simple device of interest that in a few years it was increased by £470,000 over its original amount of £3,000,000.

This covered the period brought to an end by the world war. The value of the notes in circulation, by their continuous and heavy increase, revealed how the paper currency was expanding in volume and replacing the metal currency. The value of the notes outstanding in 1914 was Tcs. 3.50 per capita, practically double the figure for British India at the time. Since 1895 the revenue had increased by over 300 per cent, both imports and exports by more than 200 per cent, and the money in circulation by 140 per cent.<sup>27</sup>

The war years were characterized by increasingly heavy demands on the Treasury for currency to meet the requirements

of the banks in connection with financing the export trade. Whenever exports exceeded imports by a sufficient amount, the banks had to obtain funds from the Treasury by selling sterling according to legal provisions. But when the export trade was dull and imports heavy, the banks had more funds than they could employ. They would as usual apply to the Treasury, but this time for sterling remittances to cover their excess sales of foreign exchange. In normal times the Reserve Fund was adequate to meet all requirements of sterling by the banks, but during the last year of the war the strain was becoming very evident. The whole period meant a continual struggle by the Ministry of Finance to furnish the currency required by the banks, which would have been wholly impossible had it not been for the greatly extended use of paper money. Between the first of April 1914 and the end of November 1918, the circulation of notes rose nearly 126 per cent.

Obviously the remedy for the shortage of ticals was to mint more, but this was not envisaged until after the price of silver had risen nearly to the point where all profit on a fresh mintage would be lost. Later, when the drain on the Treasury was assuming serious proportions, the price of silver was prohibitively high and the metal almost unprocurable. The Ministry was forced to meet the situation in other ways.

In February 1917 a new amendment to the Paper Currency Act enabled the Government to reduce its silver coin reserve to a minimum of 25 per cent of the value of the notes in circulation. It was impossible to carry out this measure, however, because gold could not be obtained in the Entente countries and the bullion and exchange values of the tical were at the time almost equal. Two further amendments in 1917 and 1918 increased the invested portion of the reserve to an amount not exceeding 75 per cent of the value of the notes in circulation. These amendments were successful; and about a fourth of the ticals, and later all, held in reserve were released.

Ever since November 1916, when the rising price of silver had begun to cause anxiety, the Government could have profitably exported ticals to sell as bullion; but this was impossible because Siam's foreign treaties provided for the free import and export of specie. By the time this obstacle had been removed by negotiation,

other elements had entered into the situation. In 1917 exports fell off because of severe floods in northern Siam, and this relieved demands on the banks for currency.

The strain that the war years had placed on the Treasury was succeeded in December 1918 by an unprecedented demand for Siamese rice. The harvest that year had been short in both India and Burma, and in any case colonial markets were rigorously controlled. Siam was the only free market for rice in that part of the world, and buyers came flocking thither. From December 1918 to March 1919 rice exports averaged 1,800,000 piculs a month as compared with 800,000 piculs during the preceding 8 months; and the banks' requirements to finance these exports were thus very heavy. As the rush of rice exports continued at ever-increasing prices, the situation was becoming dangerous from another—the domestic—viewpoint. The chief food of the poorer classes was becoming so enormously expensive that the State had to intervene and prohibit rice exports in June 1919.

All this time the paper currency was naturally rising rapidly. In the eight months ending in July 1919 it advanced 121 per cent; but after the rice export embargo it dropped quickly to its lowest point in June 1921, after which the graph rose once more. During the first four months of 1919 the average price of silver remained steady owing to the control of the British-American exchange and the fixing of a maximum price for silver by the latter government. But towards the end of March 1919 the American exchange was released from government control and the price of silver rose suddenly. Although its export was forbidden from Siam, the Treasury nevertheless had to issue subsidiary silver coins owing to a further rise in silver. This in turn necessitated a revaluation of the Government's holdings abroad, which by now amounted to a very substantial sum. The complementary reduction of the mint par exchange from Tcs. 13 to Tcs. 12 effected some saving in the budget, but a month later a new rise in the price of silver made it necessary once more to advance the exchange value of the tical.

By November 1919 Siam realized the full disaster involved in the rice crop's failure and the continued embargo on its export. In the previous thirteen months the country's exports had fallen 90 per cent, and at a time when imports were becoming more and

more expensive. The Government, faced with a very serious problem, decided to protect its currency by stopping the issue of ticals, by rationing the sale of sterling to the banks, and by raising the rate of exchange from Tcs. 13 to Tcs. 14 to the pound. In spite of its involving an increasingly unfavorable balance of trade and large purchases of sterling by the banks, the embargo was kept up until June 1921. At that time the Treasury's hope that the banks might be able to carry on without applying to the Treasury for more sterling was disappointed. But the tide eventually turned; and for the first time in eighteen months the banks sold sterling to the Government so as to replenish their funds, which were beginning to run short.

The restrictions imposed upon the banks after August 1920 had the effect of increasing their oversold accounts; and so slowly was this position reduced that the exchange rate of the tical once again had to be lowered. By that time, December 1922, the Government had maintained the exchange for more than three years at the high figure necessitated by the rapid rise in silver as a consequence of the rice embargo. Fearing that any further attempt to maintain exchange at the current level would seriously deplete its sterling resources, the Government lowered the rate of the tical to 10.80 to the pound with satisfactory results. Certain amendments to the Paper Currency Act were repealed, but the Government still retained its power to invest 75 per cent of its reserves.

The far-sightedness of Siam's financial policy stands out in contrast to the collapse of the currencies of other countries having far greater resources. One of the first States to adopt the gold exchange standard, as compared with the full gold standard of older and richer nations, Siam unfortunately followed India's lead during the war and allowed the tical to rise on the advancing tide of silver. But she redeemed this by her post-war policy, and in a comparatively short time her heavy exchange losses were wiped out by revenue surpluses. On the whole, Siam, under the absolute monarchy, managed to keep a straight and narrow fiscal path in the midst of world and local disasters. By exercising control over the exchange, particularly in the post-war period, the Government managed to keep a large proportion of the silver currency in the country; and the operations of the Paper Currency Department

imports and foreign dumping in the country. Maintaining a favorable balance of trade was obviously impossible. Tin miners complained loudly of the high expense resulting from the necessity of paying their labor and other costs in ticals while the money realized from tin was paid only in depreciated dollars. The rice millers felt the same way—only more so. As the rupee followed sterling, Burma's advantage in the rice markets over Siam became very apparent. Gold continued to pour out of the country in increasing quantities, and from April to August 1932 alone such losses came to Tcs. 14,500,000. The Government profited by the increased export tax on rice, but this was offset by the remission of arrears in tax payments.

Uncertainty as to the future persisted, and a sentiment in favor of inflation—with Prince Svasti as its chief exponent—grew during the last months of 1931. A stable currency based on gold had the advantage of maintaining Siam's high credit abroad and lowered the interest on sterling loans; but it affected adversely Siam's main business—marketing the rice crop in countries whose currency was silver. In China the slump in silver diminished Chinese purchasing power, and this in turn naturally affected sales of Siam's rice.

When the financial year closed in March 1932 with a Tcs. 10,000,000 deficit, and when it became apparent that the new taxes imposed in April were not going to solve the rice farmers' predicament, feeling ran ever stronger against the high tical. In spite of the Financial Adviser's opposition, the Government finally sanctioned the long-expected currency change on May 10, 1932. Once more the tical was linked to the pound sterling, which ruled prices in 56 per cent of Siam's markets, as opposed to the 14 per cent dominated by gold. Sterling was received in London at the rate of Tcs. 10.80 and delivered at Tcs. 11.20 to the pound. European banks and importers complained at first, but they were soon reconciled as it saved Siam's purchasing power. The public and the rice producers were naturally very pleased.

Critics of Siam's financial policy rose to state that her blunders on the exchange had occasioned a loss of Tcs. 37,500,000 in the past thirty years. The indemnity paid to banks in connection with the sale and purchase of sterling would have more than cov-

ered Siam's national debt, without continued individual losses. The Government's preoccupation had been the national debt, with a consequent sacrifice in the price fetched by the farmer's produce in the world market.

The constitutional régime would have gladly disavowed its predecessor's policy, but it endorsed the currency move of May 10 by its decision not to repeal that measure. Although the revolution temporarily affected trade, it had little importance for the country's external financial position, which recovered after a few days' uneasiness.<sup>80</sup> The fact remained that Siam had not been forced off gold by the Treasury situation but by general business conditions. The Financial Adviser, who had not favored the change and whose reports had not been published for two years, made certain critical remarks about the budgetary situation, with the result that the Minister of Finance reiterated assurances of Siam's secure currency position and his intention of maintaining the tical on parity with sterling.

The new Government succeeded in keeping the currency stable, and its essential soundness was shown by the steadily improving prices of the Siamese loans on the London stock exchange. An increase of Tcs. 8,000,000 in the currency note circulation in Siam was noted in September 1932 over the preceding year, and the currency reserve grew simultaneously. By drastic economies Siam was able to redeem a 7 per cent loan and to balance her budget by the following March. Only the unchecked exportation of gold continued to cause the country grave anxiety. Officially this was presented as no loss of national wealth but simply as selling gold, like any other commodity, at a profit. Actually there were probably not half a dozen Siamese who understood the first thing about the subject.<sup>81</sup>

When Phya Mano's Government was ousted in June 1933 by Phya Bahol, one of the first public statements made by the new Premier concerned the exchange. Rumors that the new Government would alter the exchange value of the tical were denied, and Luang Pradit's allegedly communistic economic plan was officially rejected. Beyond this the Government did not trouble to publicize its views; meetings of the Economic Council were private and not reported. Rumors began to circulate—as, for instance, that infla-

tion was probable in August or September—to the point of harming the country's business.

The year indeed proved to be a difficult one for Siam's finances. Revenues estimated at Tcs. 95,000,000 actually amounted to less than Tcs. 70,000,000. All the Ministries were instructed to reduce their expenditures. But when the Bovaradej rebellion broke out in October 1933, unjustified rumors of an impending crash in Siam's finances circulated widely abroad. Siamese securities fell, but only by five points; for her considerable currency reserves in London—two-thirds of which were in sterling—were in no way diminished, and they covered 78.5 per cent of the note issue. The panic turned out to be a flurry, and Siam's budget was balanced the following March.

An increasing divergency in policy between the conservatism of the British Financial Adviser's and the new Government's schemes for economic development and national armament became apparent under James Baxter's incumbency. The steady influence that he exerted on proposals regarding experimentation in taxation and currency devaluation was appreciated more by foreigners than by the Siamese. He was criticized in the Assembly and in the vernacular press both for his conservative budget estimates and for his disapproval of founding a national bank under Siamese management. After Baxter's tactless, though justified, exposé of the opium scandal in October 1935, it seemed unlikely that the Government would engage another English adviser. It is a tribute to his successor, W. A. M. Doll, that he has enjoyed both foreign and Siamese confidence despite the fact that he has reiterated his predecessor's criticism of unproductive capital expenditures. In view of Siam's obligations in sterling, the choice of a Financial Adviser of other than British nationality would have been inadvisable; but his position was changed from Financial Adviser to the Siamese Government to Adviser to the Ministry of Finance. His duties, it was announced, would be those of a technician and would have nothing to do with questions of policy.

Siam's fine record of financial stability continues to the present day. There was a slight flurry in 1937 owing to the depreciation of the French franc, in which some of Siam's reserves were held,

to the threatened loss of the Cuban rice market, and also very slightly to the political events connected with the Crown Lands Scandal. The conversion of ticals into sterling was arrested on November 4, when the exchange was again stabilized.

In 1939 the Ministry of Finance purchased gold bullion in London with the proceeds derived from the sale to the United States of silver bullion obtained from smelting 52,436,000 silver tical coins. The Government realized a large paper profit because of the decline in the exchange value of the pound at the time of the war's outbreak. In November the notes in circulation had increased by 19,800,000 over the beginning of the year, and the total coverage was 97.17 per cent.

In September the importation of foreign currency was prohibited except under special permit; the aim was chiefly to control the inflow of Chinese currency notes, which for some time had been coming in for speculative purposes in large quantities. It was not designed, officially, to interfere with legitimate foreign exchange transactions for trade purposes. Despite a persistent rumor of changes to come, the Government denied that it envisaged devaluation. New one-*satang* coins and new one-tical currency notes were put into circulation.

### *Loans*

The modest total of Siam's foreign indebtedness is consistent with the policy laid down by Chulalongkorn, namely, to keep the country's development as far as possible in the hands of its nationals and to avoid an insolvency that would invite foreign interference. Siam's first three foreign loans were for productive purposes and were raised at low interest rates; the remaining two were designed to strengthen a depleted Treasury and were on much less advantageous terms. Two of these loans, one of each type, have been subsequently repaid out of a Debt Redemption Fund established in 1928.

Siam put her financial house in order as a preliminary to creating credit in the European market, by means of which she planned to build her railroads. With what flying colors she passed the first test in 1905 was told by the Japanese Minister, who enviously



reported that the loan was over-subscribed eight times in forty-five minutes, and that Siam had got better terms than had his own country in the same market.<sup>82</sup>

When the question of a loan was first mooted in Siam, the Government made overtures to one bank in England and to one in France. The terms offered for £1,000,000 were 6 per cent interest. Just when Siam was about to accept these terms, the Siamese Minister in Paris happened to meet a Swiss banker and asked his advice. After examining the papers, this banker said he thought it possible to get a 4½ per cent rate; and that, if the other banks refused, he would himself take up the loan. The Siamese Minister was thus able to dictate terms to the other banks, in return for which service he received a First Class Order of Merit and a magnificent residence in Bangkok. This loan was redeemed in September 1938, by which time it had been reduced to £337,440.

The loan of £3,000,000 in 1907 was interesting from two points of view. The rate was the same as for the first loan, but it was more advantageous in that it was issued without any conditions or specific guarantees whatsoever. Negotiations were carried on with Britain and France alone up to the point where the agreement was about to be signed, when a cable came from London saying that Germany also was ready to sign and expected to do so. There had been some rumors to this effect; but Siam had indicated, as clearly as was diplomatically possible, that she would prefer to close the deal without Germany. She felt that Germany had already enough influence in her Railway and Telegraph Departments, and she wanted no more of the interference that a loan might well entail from that Government. Nevertheless, the Germans insisted on having a hand in the loan, taking advantage of the conditions already arranged with London and Paris. The shares of the Hong-kong and Shanghai Bank and the Banque de l'Indo-Chine were identical, £1,125,000; but that of the Deutsche Asiatische Bank was £750,000. This whole transaction contributed to the uneasiness then felt by England at the possibility that the Germans would participate also in the construction of the peninsular railroad.

One of the conditions of the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909 was that the Federated Malay States should finance and construct exclusively the line from Singapore to Bangkok. Great Britain

also assumed the debts of the Malay States, which she took under her sovereignty, and in addition lent £4,000,000 to be used specifically for the construction of this railroad. This loan weighted the bulk of Siam's indebtedness on the side of the London market; and later in the year England became the sole foreign creditor of Siam. The whole arrangement was advantageous to the British Empire as a whole but was never popular in the Federated Malay States. At a meeting of the Federal Council at Kuala Lumpur in December 1914, unofficial members protested against any further payments on account of the Siamese loan.<sup>33</sup> Their current lack of money, they averred, was largely due to this loan, which should have been shouldered by the Imperial Government and not forced on the Federated Malay States.

In contrast to these three loans made for productive purposes and on easy terms, the two loans of 1922 and 1924 were at the high rates of 6 per cent and 7 per cent. Moreover, they were used for nothing more constructive than to fill a Treasury depleted by Rama VI's extravagance. In spite of the State's famine in the midst of comparatively rich times, Siam's credit abroad was unimpaired. The loans were covered many times over, and that of 1922 was redeemed a decade later.

At the time these loans were made there was some agitation in the vernacular press for a purely national loan. It was argued that, even if individual capital was scarce, the aggregate in Siam must still be considerable, judging from the fact that money could usually be raised to promote industrial schemes. Moreover, the public had nobly subscribed for aeronautical defense. The expense of raising a loan abroad could thereby be saved, and a high interest rate could be paid inside the country.

In 1933 the first internal loan was launched for Tcs. 10,000,000. Before its issue the Government had naturally determined where the money could be obtained; in short, it had more or less arranged that the sum should be covered by subscriptions from the Privy Purse, various foundations, and a certain number of banks and companies.<sup>34</sup> Not having counted at all upon individual subscriptions, the administration was greatly pleased by the response of private persons, whose subscriptions totalled over Tcs. 1,600,000. The Government could have covered an issue up to Tcs. 11,-

500,000. The individual investor in Siam, however, expected a high return on his money; and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent seemed a small amount. This rate had been fixed by the Government since it knew that it was unnecessary to make the loan attractive to the individual subscriber.

The whole situation showed that a series of such loans was probably not in order, in any case to obtain money regularly for capital account. As in the past, Siam still had to rely on foreign banks for the capital she required, as only there could she obtain money at world market prices. The Government could not yet offer terms attractive to the Siamese investor and still had to depend on a few important capitalists who were able to subscribe heavily and who were glad to have a safe  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

Not until three years later did the Government venture a second internal loan for Tcs. 4,000,000 at the rate of 4 per cent. This was to be redeemed in twenty-five years, and the money was to be issued to various municipalities for public works at an interest rate of not more than 5 per cent. Some Assembly members thought that the Government could not raise such a sum from the public unless some public savings organization assisted, and that it would be better to utilize the Treasury reserve. Although the principle of the draft was accepted by fifty votes to twenty-one, minority opinion claimed that the municipalities would probably be unable to pay interest. The failure of such a loan, it was said, would be an index of the people's lack of confidence.

Nevertheless, the loan was successfully raised, as had been a Conversion Loan of £2,340,300 only for a few months before. In continuance of the established policy of reducing Siam's foreign debt as much as possible, Luang Pradit, in the course of his European tour, had persuaded his country's creditors to reduce to 4 per cent the interest on the 1924 loan of £3,000,000. This entailed an annual saving of about Tcs. 700,000. At this time, the Government again had to resist the Assembly's suggestion to use the reserve fund to redeem the whole loan, pointing to the dangers of so depleting a Treasury in an agricultural country where revenues were dependent on natural forces. In reply to Assembly opposition, Luang Pradit said that it was no longer easy to raise a loan abroad and that Siam was fortunate in not having had to accord compensatory monopolies, as some other debtor countries had been

forced to do. His arrangement was ultimately accepted by 92 votes to 4, and the loan was once again heavily over-subscribed.

In 1939 three new internal loans were decided upon, to extend over a period of four years. These loans are to be used to help producers of raw materials in agriculture and the fishery industry; to start and encourage industries in connection with these raw materials; and to ensure the success of the local development schemes. There is some question in public minds as to whether such sums can be raised in the country.

### *Capital*

The core of Siam's capital problem lies in the ineptitude of her people for commerce and industry, both as entrepreneurs and as laborers. Buddhism, autocracy, and the climate have been alternatively blamed. But regardless of where lies the main responsibility, Siam would neither have attracted nor have been forced to accept foreign capital, technicians, and labor if her own people had not shown disdain for the acquisition of money.

Traditionally the king of Siam had two treasuries, one for his own expenses and pleasures, and another that was royal rather than personal; but in practice they were usually confused. Custom obliged the king to add to this royal treasury so that the State might grow ever richer.<sup>85</sup> What expenditures were made had nothing to do with the country's development; they were either for a new temple or palace, or for alms-giving and ceremonials. Capital was static although the people were taxable and *corvéable à merci*. Interest in Mongkut's time amounted to 30 per cent, which meant that men frequently had to enslave themselves to meet their debts.<sup>86</sup> Yet in 1854 Pallegoix reported that the great majority in Siam were poor but not indigent,<sup>87</sup> for one never saw begging there except by some Laotian family in captivity. There was no such thing as a vast fortune; a rich man was one who owned what would now be Tcs. 12,000, and the biggest fortune next to the king's was less than a million francs.

The peasant, when he had the rare pleasure of enjoying a surplus, had ideas analogous to his royal master's regarding its expenditure. An ancient tale recounts a farmer's reply to his king's query as to what he did with the money he earned over and above

his daily expenses.<sup>88</sup> The peasant replied in riddles: I divide my money into four parts, the first of which I bury in the ground, by giving it in alms and making merit. The second I give to my creditors—my father and mother, to whom I owe everything I have. I fling the third quarter into the river—by gambling, drinking, and opium smoking. The final quarter I give to my enemy—that is, my wife.

Meeting obligations was not the specialty of either prince or peasant. Despite the consistently flourishing state of the Treasury, officials' salaries were regularly in arrears. Nor were private debts met with more alacrity. Constant and bitter were the complaints because some of the richest princes in the land chronically owed European firms thousands of ticals. Time and again bills were sent only to be returned with the words "another time." And these same debtors were then buying up tracts of land around Bangkok for the most sordid speculative purposes.<sup>89</sup> With such an example from above, peasants indebted themselves with all lightness of heart; and the most honest among them took every possible means of avoiding legitimate payments. From top to bottom of the social scale the Siamese had little conception of money and thought of wealth almost wholly in terms of land and jewelry.

Almost never did the Chinese bring capital to Siam. The vast majority arrived paupers and rose from the status of coolie to that of small-scale merchants through their native capacities and industry. At first they came to control the state monopolies; and when these were abolished, they concentrated on financing the rice crop and controlling retail trade, with the result that about 90 per cent of the commerce is now in Chinese hands. Considerable Chinese capital came in time to be invested in small peninsular tin mines.

Only in comparatively recent years has the problem of the Chinese in relation to the national wealth troubled the Siamese. When the Treasury surplus showed signs of defaulting during the depression, the precarious economic equilibrium of the country suddenly began to be appreciated. It came to be realized that the only funds out of which national wealth could be built up lay in the margin between the production and export values of Siamese rice, and to a lesser extent of her other primary produce. This

margin, calculated at about 50 per cent of the export value, was taken up by the middlemen, who were almost exclusively Chinese.<sup>10</sup>

The Siamese, who had heretofore shown not the slightest interest in, or aptitude for, bringing producer and consumer together, began to feel that the price they were paying for Chinese enterprise was far too high, especially as the resulting profits were almost wholly repatriated to China. Various figures as to the amount of this outflow have been given by experts. In 1926 Sir Edward Cook referred to the sum of Tcs. 26,000,000, suggested as far back as 1913, as an overestimate; and Doll felt the same way about the estimate of Tcs. 37,000,000 made by a prominent Chinese banker in 1932. However, in addition to the sums regularly sent to China, the patriotic contributions made during the present conflict must also be taken into consideration.

These invisible exports, of course, are not entirely Chinese but also include profits made by Occidentals doing business in Siam. How much these profits come to is almost wholly a matter of conjecture. Nor is there any way of checking on the amount of foreign capital invested in the country.

The *Statist*, in its issue of April 15, 1933, tried to answer the difficult question as to how much British capital was invested in Siam. In 1932 the English Financial Adviser somehow arrived at the figure of £20,000,000 as representing British capital in the form of loans and enterprises controlled by British interests. Certainly a large part of the foreign trade was either directly or indirectly financed by British capital, notably teak in the north and tin in the south. But so much of this considerable capital is fluctuating—that is, active in Siam when times are good and then taken home or elsewhere for investment when a depression sets in—that even bankers find it hard to estimate.<sup>41</sup>

The three loans quoted on the London Stock Exchange probably form a very small part of the British capital employed in Siam. There is an important overland trade with Burma, partly in textiles and partly in forest produce, not to mention the commerce between the Siamese peninsula and Penang. British shipping was once very important; but for a long time before the outbreak of the world war in Europe it had been replaced by German, and

British goods to a considerable quantity are shipped in Norwegian bottoms.

Japan, so feared by her competitors in southeastern Asia, has virtually no capital invested in Siam. This is not from lack of offers, but because the Siamese Government has rejected it. Up to 1941 her holdings consisted of a tin mine in the peninsula and a plantation on which experiments in cotton growing are being made with Siamese labor. Moreover, although Siam has refused to let Japan invest in the new government factories, she nevertheless continues to order manufactures from Japan so long as they are cheaper than elsewhere and to send her officers there for training.

Capital invested by Occidentals other than the British falls into categories almost as distinct as the adviserships in government departments. Until 1941 the French investment was chiefly represented by extensive mission lands, estimated in 1902 as being worth 10,000,000 gold francs.<sup>42</sup> There was also a teak company in the north and a promising gold mine in the south, but the rest of the scattered investment was comparatively insignificant.

The Danes and Belgians were industrial pioneers. The tramway in Bangkok was so great a success that it paid its Danish sponsor 34 per cent annually.<sup>43</sup> This was thought to be an instructive object lesson to the Siamese as to the productive uses to which money, heretofore hoarded, could be put; and to this realization was attributed the many new brick buildings that sprang up shortly afterwards in Bangkok. The royal family has shown an interest in Bangkok land speculation and in the Paknam Railway.

The absolute monarchy periodically became concerned over the apathy of the Siamese in permitting and even encouraging foreigners to exploit their resources. Prince Siddhiporn, in an interesting and timely article, expressed the Government's unofficial attitude.<sup>44</sup> He preached to the middle class to take up the development of their country without first awaiting extension of the means of communication. It was not enough to exert themselves chiefly in placing unobtrusive obstacles in the way of foreign investors and in using economic concessions as a lever to obtain political treaty concessions. The railroad junction of Haad Yai was an illustration of the consequences of Siamese indifference. The land on both sides of the road in that commune belonged to

foreigners. Originally it had been taken up as a speculation by officials, but they had sold it to some Chinese. In the *changvad* of Singora alone, 100,000 *rai* of land had in this way come into Chinese hands.

Foreign capital, said Prince Siddhiporn, has always been regarded as dangerous for a small country like Siam, as witnessed by the effect of economic imperialism in Syria, Egypt, and Manchuria. It also involves bringing in foreign labor, and both employers and employees send their earnings out of the country. All Siam gets out of their activities is a land tax and a tax on produce; and if these are not kept light, foreign capital will be withdrawn. In mining the situation is worse than in teak; for not only the labor and capital but also the machinery and gasoline are foreign. Minerals are not a source of endless wealth since they can never be replaced, and exploiting mines is analogous to living on one's capital. Any large increase in their output only brings down the price and with it the royalty, which is all that Siam gets out of it. Prince Siddhiporn did not advocate a dog-in-the-manger attitude. Foreigners had taken much from Siam, but they had also created outlets for Siam's trade and endowed the country with modern education and machinery. But Siam must maintain her cautious attitude about accepting foreign aid and must actively go about developing her own resources and the strength that comes with national wealth.

The constitutional régime took a more aggressive stand on the same ground. The foreign companies were not wholly blameless; for the moment the revolution came they took fright and sent much of their money abroad. Only recently the chairman of the Burmah-Malaya Tin Company made a tactless statement to the effect that the Siamese Government was over-nationalistic and had overlooked the fact that Siam's prosperity was due to a large extent to the foreign money invested in the country. In this statement, he completely ignored the geography of the country and the character of the people as wealth-producing factors. Since 1932 foreign companies, individual businessmen, and banks have been for the first time taxed on a sliding scale according to their resources. And the foreigners have attributed their failure to make such profits as formerly far more to the new Government's policy than to the depression. Many interpret the handwriting on the wall to mean



the end of foreign enterprise in the country, and it is certainly more restricted and taxed than before. But the Government is not so nationalistic or so inexperienced as is the Assembly; it realizes that Siam still needs foreign capital, at least during the period while national capital and technicians are being built up to replace it. Thus the foreign firms are still allowed to remain, but they are being placed increasingly under government control.

The more independent attitude of the constitutional régime has had the effect of frightening off potential foreign investors. Both in number and amount foreign trade interests have greatly decreased in Siam since the *coup d'état* of 1932. Credit developments have been slow because of the political uncertainty to which Siam's internal and Asiatic policy have contributed; and present profits are small compared with what investments brought in other days. But although the old Paknam Railroad, which paid huge dividends, passed into state ownership, the other transport companies, such as the Siam Steam Packet, the Menam Motor Boat Company, and the Siam Electric Company, have been quite steady profit-earners. Shipping is an exception in that it has not returned at all to the prosperous days of a decade ago. Coastal shipping should, however, profit by the improvement in tin and rubber prices. The balance sheets of almost every company that has varied interests show modest dividends. There is little transfer of stocks. Years ago shareholders invested in the Siam Electric Company or the Bangkok Dock, and the absence of any sharebrokers and stock quotations have helped greatly to keep these shares in the hands of their original holders.

The present Government has endeavored to encourage foreign investors to reinvest their profits in Siam. To offset the fact that Siam is an agricultural country with a small industrial development concentrated in Bangkok, the Government started its own sugar, paper, and silk factories in the provinces in order to attract capital, which had heretofore had no large-scale industrial field of investment. But in spite of the announcement that private capital would be welcomed and that eventually these factories would be turned over to private management, the Government was finally forced to supply all the funds itself. Siamese reluctance was not due to the same cause as that of foreigners—lack of confidence in government

policy and industrial management—but rather to the fact that there was little capital to invest and the Siamese still preferred to put what they had in land and usury. There are very few Siamese investors in foreign companies with the notable exception of the Siam Electric Company.

Only a handful of Siamese may be called even 'reasonably wealthy. The income tax of 1937-8, which exempted income under 2,400 Tcs. a year, netted the absurd sum of Tcs. 383,030. This indicates that the aggregate of private fortunes in the country does not exceed Tcs. 46,101,000. Moreover, the majority of those paying income tax are government officials or foreigners. Until 1940 there were only 2,731 Siamese who paid any income tax at all. In other words, out of a population of over fourteen millions, less than 3,000 individuals have annual incomes over \$1,100. Of these, only ninety-four have incomes from Tcs. 10,000 to Tcs. 20,000; only thirty-five, from Tcs. 20,000 to Tcs. 30,000; and only twenty-nine over Tcs. 30,000. The greatest fortune in the country in Siamese hands, apart from the Privy Purse, is Tcs. 39,000. The average income in the northeast provinces is Tcs. 4, and in the center Tcs. 150. There is no such thing as wealth in Siam as the West understands it. As one foreign observer remarked, a man may be passing rich in Siam on \$200 a year.

The gold that was exported so freely during the depression years certainly represented some decline in national wealth; for during the same period Siam exported more than Indo-China, which has almost twice her population. But this flow of gold began to diminish markedly in 1935. The amount of Siamese capital in the savings banks in 1940 came to little over Tcs. 13,000,000—that is, less than a tical per head of the population—and almost half of that had been deposited during the previous two years. These savings, of which less than Tcs. 500,000 is invested, are no more productive than traditional Siamese capital, which is frozen in land and gold.

How much capital was displaced by the departure of the princes is a matter of conjecture. Prince Damrong, for instance, was impeccably honest; and the small pension he is given does not permit his family even to enjoy club membership privileges. The Railway Prince spent money like water; none of it stuck to his

hands, and he was almost a pauper when he died. Only one really rich Siamese prince, besides King Prajadhipok, expatriated himself and his capital to Java—Prince Parabatra. Although taxing crown properties did not really become a political issue, the Queen Mother and the Queen Grandmother have vainly approached the Government with a view to getting their money out of the country; and the Government has seized some dozen boxes of royal jewelry in an effort to control in some measure this private outflow. Statistics are as yet so undeveloped a science in Siam that it is impossible to estimate just how much this displacement of capital has affected the country's development.

Capital, in the broadest sense, certainly exists in Siam; but it is found in weird places and forms, and much of it is out of circulation. The younger men are now persuading their rich elders to let them open businesses; but when they enter commerce, they are so inexperienced that they usually spend all their capital on equipment long before their business is even opened. Yet in this way needed experience is gained, and at least the money is put into circulation. Many more Siamese are opening retail shops, but it will be years before they can compete with the Chinese. As regards large-scale ventures the Siamese are distrustful of their compatriots' business capacities and inclined not to risk an investment unless the enterprise has government backing, and even then they want larger interest rates than the Government up to now has paid.

### *Banking: The Exchange Banks*

Siam is, if anything, over-banked. It would be hard to find anywhere else so cosmopolitan a group for so small a country as is represented by the exchange banks of Bangkok: three British, one French, one Chinese,<sup>45</sup> one Siamese, and one Japanese. In addition to these, there are about twenty Chinese 'native' banks and nearly a hundred remittance firms with capital ranging from Tcs. 500,000 to Tcs. 2,000,000. The activities of these Chinese banks and firms center in Sampeng; and their home relations are with Swatow, Hongkong, and Shanghai. But their funds, in turn, are kept with the leading exchange institutions.

With the minor handicap of arranging banking holidays to suit

national proclivities, the seven exchange banks are happily controlled by a mutual agreement that regulates the smooth working of their cheque clearances every evening. Heavy inter-bank exchange operations are effected without any European brokers. Because of Britain's numerical and financial predominance, English is throughout the written and spoken language, and practices in general conform to British custom. The Siamese Civil and Commercial Code is adhered to.

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China, and the Banque de l'Indochine were the first to do business in Siam, coming to the country in 1888, 1893, and 1897 respectively. These three banks were the agencies for transmitting foreign loans and inaugurated the use of paper money in Bangkok. Their pioneering activities in the latter field made the government notes a success when they were introduced later. Their activities, however, did not include establishing regular banking facilities for the interior of the country.

This function was left to the Siam Commercial Bank, which until 1939 was the only indigenous institution doing foreign exchange and general banking business in the country. During the war its German manager was replaced by an Englishman, which brought this bank somewhat into the British orbit. Nominally a private institution, it acts as a government bank; and its intimate connections with the Privy Purse should be kept in mind. The branch that it opened at Chiangmai has proved to be a drain, but the more recent Lampang branch is very successful.

The failure of the China-Siam Bank in December 1913 precipitated a financial crisis and revealed fraud in both official and business circles in Bangkok. The cause was hard to remedy. Official personnel might be changed, but apparently not its dishonest methods, or at least the profitable abuse of office.<sup>46</sup> The class and family ties of the civil servants made investigation and punishment difficult. All the accused asked to be shown other officials whose hands were any cleaner, and this was regarded as an adequate excuse. The failure of the China-Siam Bank involved most of the exchange banks, but chiefly the Siam Commercial Bank. After a prolonged investigation of the tangled position in regard to forged bills and

Chinese notes, its losses were estimated at Tcs. 4,000,000. Of the existing capital, Tcs. 2,700,000 was written off with the shareholders' approval. In addition, the surplus funds of the bank, amounting to Tcs. 1,137,000, were gone. After this the Siam Commercial Bank's policy became very conservative. Even in prosperous years it declared a 5 per cent dividend by contrast with the Mercantile Bank, for instance, which during the depression reduced its regular 16 per cent dividend to 12 per cent as the result of a fall of 28½ per cent in earnings.<sup>47</sup>

In 1932 the Siam Commercial Bank suffered an important exchange loss as a result of the depreciation on a gold basis of the bank's balances and investments in sterling and allied currencies.<sup>48</sup> At this time other profits offset the loss, but in 1935 the bank was once again in trouble. In January of that year the bank's director stated frankly that, on account of the shrinkage in the value of real properties and the lack of a fair market, the bank had curtailed its loans and had decided not to pay its semi-annual dividend. Early in March a short-lived run on the bank occurred, obviously as a result of rumored withdrawals of funds by the royal family, whose investments had formerly been handled by the Privy Purse Department. In the Assembly it was denied that Prajadhipok had drawn on his account to any appreciable extent or that the run had affected the bank's financial standing in the least.<sup>49</sup> Holding money both in London and Siam, the Siam Commercial Bank could easily meet its obligations. In 1938 an American of the National City Bank of New York was appointed General Manager.

The Chinese banks in Bangkok, like the other foreign exchange institutions, are but branches of larger concerns chartered abroad. As it has worked out, this has had rather an adverse effect in the case of the Chinese. In 1935 there was a run on the Sze Hai Tong Bank because of the rumor that one of its employees in the main branch at Hongkong had absconded with a considerable sum. In spite of the withdrawal of Tcs. 500,000 from the Bangkok branch, the strong financial position of this bank soon stopped the run. In the same way, publication in the Chinese press of a false report regarding the Chinese Government's alleged assumption of control over the International Savings Society in Canton caused a run on its Bangkok dependency. The report that the Bank of Canton had

suspended payments proved to be true, however, and was followed by the voluntary liquidation of the Bangkok branch.<sup>50</sup>

In July 1936 the Yokohama Specie Bank opened a branch at Bangkok. This was the second time that a Japanese bank had tried to establish itself in Siam. An earlier attempt made by the Bank of Taiwan had failed a few years after the branch was opened. In 1936, however, it was felt that the larger commercial operations between Siam and Japan were sufficient to obtain for this bank an adequate share in the port's trade; and this proved to be the case.

The exchange banks of Bangkok are chiefly occupied in financing the country's export trade and are therefore directly affected by market conditions, particularly in the case of rubber, tin, teak, and rice. Much of the tin and teak, however, is financed by Malayan banks. It is through the medium of the exchange banks that exporters who are paid in foreign currency obtain ticals. Importers who have to make payments in foreign currency effect this by tendering ticals to the exchange banks.<sup>51</sup> Excess of exports over imports means that the amount of ticals that the exchange banks receive from importers is less than the amount they have to pay to exporters. The deficiency is made up by the Government, which has also to make large remittances abroad to pay for interest on loans, materials imported for state departments, pensions to retired foreign employees, the expenses of legations, etc. For this the Government has to obtain foreign currency, and this is usually obtained from the exchange banks and paid for in ticals. This arrangement satisfies both parties and helps bridge the gap between exports and imports. In other words, the Government's remittances help greatly to liquidate the balance of trade and to exercise a steadying influence on the exchange.

The depression handicapped the banks by the reduction, not so much in the quantity of the overseas trade, as in its greatly diminished value. Currency vacillations were also most unsettling to the banking business. Although the trade balance remained favorable and the currency position sound, and although the Treasury continued to be well managed despite political and economic upheavals, gold was flowing out of the country. Some of the provinces were so denuded of currency that they offered paddy and produce in payment of taxes. Tins of milk even became a medium

of exchange in one district.<sup>52</sup> The production of silver continued to decrease in spite of the efforts to demonetize silver. Many people, not realizing how the banks were being affected by the export situation, thought them full of surplus money, especially after they reduced the interest they were paying on fixed deposits as a result of the new banking tax.<sup>53</sup>

This, however, was not the case; for private deposits had fallen to an abnormally low figure. No money was released for lending. The value of land had fallen so low that it was no longer regarded as valuable security. Even the Government was affected. Because of the drop in the interest rate allowed by the banks, the Red Cross Society lent to the Ministry of the Interior at 5 per cent interest over Tcs. 1,000,000 for municipal public works. Trade had decreased in value, and less capital was needed to finance it; thus even though the banks had smaller funds at their disposal, they had all that was needed. A lack of outlets for the money that was available was the justification for allowing smaller rates on fixed deposits than during the years of prosperity.

### *Savings Banks*

In 1913 the Treasury established savings banks. During the succeeding war years the money of even the small investor commanded high rates of interest; and this probably hindered the growth and usefulness of the savings banks, which paid only 2 per cent on current, and 3 per cent on fixed, deposits. This effort to encourage thrift has had little effect on a people who are far from being money-minded. The Siamese have traditionally saved their money in the form of investing their surplus in land and jewelry. Little statistical data are available, but the export of gold—chiefly by farmers—in the depression years 1931-33 came to over Tcs. 35,000,000. Heretofore relatively little gold had been exported—for the fifteen years prior to the slump it had not amounted to Tcs. 100,000; and the imports of gold during that same period totaled over Tcs. 112,000,000.

The substitution of paper for silver had affected somewhat the savings habits of the Siamese. Before gold could be purchased, silver coins had to be hoarded; and the old hiding places did not prove to be safe for silver. Yet when they were buried in the

ground or hidden in the wall, these silver coins were not affected by dampness or rats, as was later the case with paper money. Nowadays silver ticals have practically all disappeared from circulation, but years passed before the Siamese would entrust their savings to the banks installed by the Government in provincial post offices. The small interest given by these banks was slight inducement; moreover, the Government held out little hope of setting up more than one savings bank per *changvad*. Getting the money to this bank was quite a hazardous task in a country so generally inaccessible. Even money orders are still not obtainable outside the post offices. The Government has promised more facilities, but only when there is sufficient demand for them. Nor are such banks as now exist above suspicion. The prevalence of theft by postal clerks led to an inquiry in the Assembly in June 1934. The Government stated then that it certainly intended to create more banks to safeguard provincial savings, but that this was not immediately possible as only the few clerks who were paid the princely sum of Tcs. 80 a month were judged to be sufficiently above temptation to handle savings accounts.

Deposits have grown, but slowly. The Boy Scout movement, strangely enough, popularized the idea of savings banks and government loans as a means of investment. In 1913-14 the number of depositors was 529, and their savings totalled Tcs. 135,234; twenty years later the number was 62,545, and savings aggregated Tcs. 8,100,000. In the year of the first *coup d'état*, depositors increased by nearly 8,000, and their savings by over Tcs. 1,000,000.

In 1936, when the aggregate capital in the savings banks had risen to about Tcs. 12,000,000, the problem arose as to how it should be invested. In October 1935 an amendment was drafted providing for government guarantee of both principal and interest in the case of the money in the savings banks. But this measure was not passed for fear it would encourage the Government to speculate with these sums, which were at the time almost wholly dormant as cash in the coffers of Bangkok's exchange banks. The little that was invested—Tcs. 373,996—had been put into foreign or internal loan bonds. The Assembly and State Council began to compete for the control of these sums.<sup>54</sup>

The following year the Government launched its offensive



with an Act to permit investment of these savings, under official guarantee, in the public works that were to be undertaken by the newly organized municipalities. Such investment would be handled by a committee, which was to include two State Councillors. Though the Assembly was reluctant to yield so much power, it was finally persuaded by the argument that by this means the savings could not only be used in developing the country but would become self-supporting and no longer require interest to be paid to depositors out of budgetary allotments.<sup>58</sup>

In 1938 the amount in the government savings banks came to over Tcs. 13,000,000—an increase of more than Tcs. 6,000,000 in the preceding two years. In 1939 deposits amounted to Tcs. 15,330,279.

### *Banking Laws*

One of the first acts of the Constitutional Government was to pass a law taxing insurance companies and banks. The insurance companies simply passed the tax along to policy holders, whose resources until then had not been seriously tapped. The banking measure, a modified replica of the successful Philippine model, created two classes of banks—deposit and exchange. *Crédit foncier* and savings institutions were also defined separately. The protests that emanated from the big banks, which were incidentally listed as deposit and not as exchange banks, were justified only by the tactlessness with which the new law was promulgated and not by the tax program itself. A most unfortunate misunderstanding was the assumption that the big banks were to be taxed on the capital employed in the average monthly deposits as well as on exchange transactions. All that the big banks were actually to pay to the Government was  $\frac{1}{48}$  of 1 per cent on the capital employed for each month and  $\frac{1}{36}$  of 1 per cent on the average amount of deposits for each month. The tax in Manila came to twice what it was in Bangkok. The banks not unnaturally tried to pass the new tax on to the customer by charging higher rates of interest on loans, paying lower rates on deposits, and demanding a fee for small checking accounts. It turned out to be a really practical measure as evasion was virtually impossible.

Five years elapsed before a new law was passed controlling banking still further. After April 1, 1938, banks in Siam had to

have a fully paid up capital of at least Tcs. 200,000; their security, ranging from between  $\frac{1}{6}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the capital, had to be deposited with the Government; and each bank had to set aside at least 10 per cent of its net profits annually until it had built up a reserve of 50 per cent of its capital. At certain intervals statements were required to be published. Though the law was not rigid, it undoubtedly had some effect in preventing the establishment of new banks in provincial cities. In turn, this has perpetuated the time-honored custom of keeping cash and valuables in private households and business offices. A corollary law was an Act for the prevention of profiteering, which was also promulgated in 1938.

While it may be said that no one bank likes these new laws, it is also true that not one of them has openly voiced its objections. It certainly runs counter to the traditions of the older banks to present periodic confidential reports. Theoretically the Act is impeccable and makes banking practices in Siam uniform; but it is unnecessary for those banks established according to English and French laws, which are already strict.

### *A National Siamese Bank*

When it was announced in 1899 that the concession for a national bank in Siam had been accorded to a European bloc headed by Danish bankers, surprise was expressed at this reversal of Siam's traditional policy of keeping economic control in the hands of her nationals. This national bank never materialized, and at the time there was little need to establish one. Even the long-discussed plans for establishing a German bank fell through. Not until the advent of the nationalistic constitutional régime did the question of a national bank again come to the fore.

No less a person than the Director of the Post and Telegraph Department submitted, in the fall of 1934, a scheme for expansion of the savings banks into a national bank. The rate of interest paid was to be increased, and the maximum deposit raised to Tcs. 5,000.<sup>56</sup> When the question was broached in the Assembly, its members were naturally delighted by the prospect of Siam's moving a step forward among the industrial nations of the world. But when the Minister of Economic Affairs replied that a national bank could not be established "for unmentionable reasons," the nationalist press rushed to the conclusion that this meant English

and French opposition.<sup>57</sup> The *Sri Krung*, in a very heated article, had already said that the Government must engage no more narrow-minded Englishmen as Financial Advisers, and that only Sir Edward Cook had been worth his very costly salt.<sup>58</sup> The foreign banks already established had shown partiality in helping every nation but Siam, since they claimed that no Siamese was qualified to manage a bank. Even the Siam Commercial Bank was run by a foreigner; it was much too conservative, and in any case it was really the king's bank as he alone guaranteed it against loss. The Finance Ministry was scolded for having no monetary policy at all and for having simply piled up a Treasury reserve, which might better be invested at home than abroad, where the interest rates were ridiculous. The cry for a national bank was taken up on a big scale by the vernacular press.

One of the major obstacles has been that no two persons have meant the same thing by the term "national bank." Apparently the Assembly wants a bank to promote Siamese business without disturbing the functioning of the Treasury Department as a bank of issue and a central bank. The Financial Adviser is convinced that the scheme's popularity arises from a misconception of the essential functions of a national bank. Such a bank would be useful only to a country where it could be superimposed on a considerable banking and credit structure. But in Siam the only banking that exists is exchange banking; there is no credit market and no stock market, and even Siam's rice markets are in Hongkong and Singapore. Wrongly used and directed, a national bank could be much more harmful as an instrument for inflation than a department limited in its power to the issue and redemption of currency. Judging from the fact that pleas for a national bank have always been coupled with insistence on relieving the farmers' plight, the Financial Adviser feels that what is really meant—and also needed—is an extension of facilities for agricultural credit. Nevertheless, in September 1939 the Minister of Finance won approval for a bill for the establishment of the Thai National Bank, which was placed under the control of his Ministry. This bank does not do all types of banking; its primary function is to stabilize the country's financial credit. Profits from the recent currency transactions provided the capital for its establishment.

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## XVII · LABOR

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In ancient Siam the services owed by every freeman to the State and to his patron and the legal existence of seven classes of slaves obviated the existence of such situations known today as labor problems.

The enslavement of war prisoners was an ancient Thai practice; but slavery developed greatly when the Thais came into contact with peoples like the Khmers and Peguans, who had already made it a legal institution.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Siamese soon became distinguished for the ease with which anyone might become a slave. Fathers could sell their children, a husband his wife, and all could and often did sell themselves into slavery. Chronic warfare was one of the main causes of Siam's underpopulation; and to remedy this perpetual short-handedness the Siamese conducted periodic slave hunts, chiefly among the Khas. They transported whole communities of vanquished peoples and to supplement them bought slaves from professional Chinese raiders.<sup>2</sup> The State in those days either condoned or actually furthered the slave trade, and not until the nineteenth century did it attempt to intervene in the relations between master and slave.

In the time of Pallegoix slaves were the chief wealth of a prosperous family. They formed from a fourth to a third of the total population, and if bought outright they cost about Tcs. 100 apiece.<sup>3</sup> Though their condition varied, both in regard to individual treatment and at different periods of history, their status was always comparatively easy and generally humane.

During the Bangkok period, when the remnants of Ayuthia's laws were gathered together, legislation began to supplant custom, especially in regard to debt slavery. Half a century later, with the growth of the export trade and the subsequent rise in land values, slavery lost its economic basis and could be abolished without disturbing profoundly the country's economy. The process took

almost a century. Permission to purchase their freedom was extended to war prisoners and to all the children of slaves in 1805. To raise Siam's prestige in foreign eyes and as an indispensable preliminary to the reorganization of the administration, successive steps were taken to abolish slavery between 1870 and 1905. Thus in the early twentieth century about a quarter of the Siamese nation was disorientated economically and socially; and the natural improvidence of the Siamese—a product of their former social and political system—left them resourceless after so radical a change.

An intermediary stage between free and slave labor was brought about by the Siamese custom of hereditary employment, really a form of *corvée* service. The harshest form this assumed was the hereditary obligation to service in the army or the navy. Until Richelieu modernized the navy, the only escape for a man and for his descendants from this hated service was to acquire a certain degree of education, which brought automatic exemption.

Hereditary compulsion among the Siamese artisans was a major cause of the decline in local arts and industries. Talent was rewarded by forced service in the patron's household, under disadvantageous economic and social conditions. In working for their masters and not for themselves, these artisans lost their initiative and stifled what creative impulses they had. This inheritance of professions and trades characterized all classes of Siamese society, but public officials were the most insecure. They might train their sons to follow in their footsteps and then incur the king's displeasure and be dismissed. There was no guarantee of advancement, as in the humbler forms of royal service, which were crystallized by law. The sons of the king's goldsmiths or elephant boys were legally required to train their sons to become assistants to them.<sup>4</sup> In practice this amounted to a real restriction of labor and a limitation of profession.

King Mongkut was the first monarch to modify the *rachakan*, or the service owed by individuals to the State. He decreed that men no longer had to perform work that might be done by paid labor. Accordingly, the waterways constructed in his reign were built with free labor.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the rural populace was still used for police work, road construction, and canal dredging; and independent officials were still able to requisition materials and

service for their private affairs, even during harvest time. But slowly the State managed to require that conscripted work should have public utility and be paid at fixed prices, and that conscript labor should be used only when free labor was not available.

This last condition was the hardest to satisfy. When officials traveled in the interior, they were often stranded or seriously delayed because of the impossibility of finding coolies. Even the State itself had trouble in getting labor for public works. If no Chinese were available, it was with the utmost difficulty that telegraph poles were set up after they had been displaced in a storm or by the playfulness of elephants. Finally, criminals were used as labor; and though convict labor is still used in Siam, it has not given any great satisfaction.

A story current among Bangkok foreigners relates that a Siamese who was indignant that his people should be described as "incorrigibly idle" could only offer the counter characterization that they were "incurably indolent." It is certain that unless the Siamese are in desperate straits they will refuse to hire out their services. The bounty of tropical nature has made it superfluous for them to work for the necessities of life. They want to be their own masters and to work under no outside compulsion as regards hours and place. When they accept employment, it is to do a piece of agricultural work in their own way; and the irregularity of the farming season is most congenial to them. To this day the Siamese rarely specializes in any one form of employment but supplements his main source of income by varied part-time activities.

Regional differences and a natural propensity to certain forms of employment led long ago to a slight division of labor. Moreover, the revolution in Siam's economy and the development of the export trade created new work in connection with the growth of building and transportation industries, in addition to more employment as the land under cultivation increased. The commercialization of agriculture also brought in its wake marked specialization in the crafts; and with the withdrawal of the Siamese from competition, these industries came more and more into the hands of foreigners. The Chinese came to be dominant among the port coolies, boat-builders, carpenters, market gardeners, tradesmen, and miners, until they formed over 70 per cent of the non-agricul-

tural laborers; the Malays worked their paddy fields, did machine labor in mills, and shared in the fishing industry with the Siamese; the Javanese came to specialize in gardening; the Burmese and Shans largely withdrew from the teak industry and began to concentrate on dealing in gems and itinerant peddling; the Cinghalese were the jewelers and goldsmiths of the country; the Indians from Bombay were more usually retail merchants, and the Bengalis tailors; and the ubiquitous Tamils were either cattlemen or shopkeepers.

### *Regional Labor*

In the north, forest labor is still by preference Khamu; but the supply is getting shorter every year and the place of the Khamus is being increasingly taken by Laos and various mountain tribes. There is still a Khamu village near Ubol, but the majority come over every year from Indo-China. Each group is organized under a headman, who arranges his men's contracts, is responsible for them if they run away, and collects for this service an enormous commission taken from their minuscule wages. These Khamu laborers are thus reduced to virtual slavery—a situation that the French consul at Nan has vainly been trying to control.

These Khamus earn as little as 100 rupees a year, but this is a fortune to them in Indo-China, where the cost of living is lower than in Siam. When they return home, they can buy a little land and marry. A humble, gullible, and illiterate people, they are excellent workmen and are easily dominated. Only on the rare occasions when they marry Lao women and adopt the Siamese dress do they get rid of their inferiority complex. Their greatest drawback is a tendency to run away if they feel unhappy, and this can be caused by a mere threatening glance of the headman's eye.

Labor for felling, logging, and dragging is organized and housed in regular camps, each under the control of a headman and his assistant.<sup>6</sup> The work is done in gangs, in which the axemen labor in pairs, each pair felling from three to five trees a day. The carting work is chiefly in Lao hands, as is that of elephant driving and rafting, though the latter is confined to the families who live along the river banks in the various localities where the rafts are made up. Engaged in this business from father to son, these river Laos

have a unique knowledge of lumber operations and of their river's behavior.

The vast majority of Laos are farmers who plough their own land. Only the very prosperous hire labor, and then it is on a *métayage* basis, in which the owner provides the land and sometimes the draft animals. For this he retains a part of the crop, in addition to his advance. The wooden ploughs and harrows are made by the farmers themselves and are correspondingly inefficient. Threshing is done principally by hand, and this work provides the greatest use for labor both in northern and central Siam. During the harvest in the north, farmers help each other in turn. When labor is hired, it is paid in rice instead of money, of which there is little in circulation; and on the rare occasions when they are paid in money, wages are lower than in the south, averaging about 50 *satangs* a day.

The economy of the Lao country is almost wholly self-sufficing. The adjacent jungle furnishes enough bamboo to build a house and a fence; rice seed is available at all times and for nothing, and a man can grow enough paddy for his own family's needs. Fish abound in the nearby streams; fowls are kept beneath the house; tobacco grows almost wild; and the women of the household keep silk worms and weave their own skirts. The cotton tree gives all the thread that is required. If the Lao farmer needs something further, he can barter his surplus. Whatever time is left after the Laos have fed, housed, and clothed themselves, is spent in warding off evil spirits. Only a few years ago some villagers inquired of a traveling official how he could possibly spend all his salary.<sup>7</sup>

When the Lao migrates to the central plains for the six months of the paddy season, he is lodged and fed and returns home with about \$35 or \$40, which will last him and his family for about three years. Unfortunately, however, with the growth of communications, men are seeping into the north country with the express purpose of fleecing the gullible Laos. Seasonal laborers returning after the Menam farming season is over have to be escorted to their homes by the local gendarmerie; otherwise they would lose all they have brought back to the pack of wolves who hungrily haunt the Korat station. A more serious menace to Lao security is the encroachments of the Chinese in the region around



Lampang. Already they are in control of the local weaving, tanning, and sugar industries and are beginning to spread even farther north.

Theoretically, farming costs in the north are nearly double what they are in southern Siam because of the greater amount of human labor employed. A herd of buffaloes is turned loose to trample on a small area of ground, which is thereafter subjected to little additional harrowing or ploughing.<sup>8</sup> Both men and women furnish the human labor that is used for transplanting, harvesting, threshing, weeding, and carrying the crops home; but only the men do the ploughing and transportation. In farming villages where Malays dominate, less labor is employed than in exclusively Thai districts. The Malay social organization makes it possible for a householder to get his work done for him free by his dependents, and in general the Malays do not commercialize their products and work as little as possible and in very small units. They survive quite pleasantly on a diet of bananas, durians, and coconuts. Next to agriculture, fishing—both inland and maritime—is the most important Malay industry. When fishing is done in groups larger than the family organization, labor must be hired; but the pay is simply a proportion of the catch.<sup>9</sup>

In the peninsular mines the labor and much of the management are still almost wholly Chinese. Just before the depression all but 5 per cent of the 729,000 mining laborers were Chinese, with regional differences.<sup>10</sup> In the western mines the labor hails from Hainan. In the old days the mortality was so high there from fever and dysentery, especially among new arrivals, that panics would cause the disappearance of many coolies. The local authorities, when requested to intervene on the score of broken contracts, said that they would gladly do so if the delinquent could first be brought to law. Chinese owners got round this difficulty by importing indentured labor and later by paying their coolies on the basis of the ore produced, thus giving them a stake in the mine.

Chinese mining methods differ from European in respect to both time and money. Since almost all the processes are done manually in Chinese mines, an almost unlimited number of workmen is needed. The Chinese employer prefers cheap labor to buying costly machinery. Moreover, since the coolies have to buy

everything they need at the company's store in view of the remote situation of most of the mines, wages return to some extent to the employer-owner. Many Chinese owners prefer a profit-sharing method to a standard wage.

The Siamese never like to work for other people, and in the peninsula there is even less necessity for their so doing than in the north. The peninsula Chinese do everything but grow rice. A Chinese broker will undertake to smuggle some compatriots into the small peninsula ports in junks, and they have to work off their passage debt like serfs wherever he cares to place them. However, they can soon free themselves since labor is much more highly paid here than in the north. An energetic worker can earn a tical a day, of which he need only spend 15 *satangs* for food—a big rice dish with meat costs only 10 *satangs*. It is hard to get domestic servants in the peninsula as most of the Chinese prefer to work in the mines and the Siamese, when they hire out their services, engage in tapping rubber, which is much more profitable. Both Siamese and Malays keep a year's provisions of rice on hand against a bad harvest; but in any case, if the crop is poor, the Government will always help out. They plant just enough for their own use, and the Government's efforts to introduce supplementary vegetable and nut crops have not met with success.

Within the last few years the Government's policy of restricted immigration has had an unfortunate repercussion on the peninsula's labor supply. On some very small estates tapping ceased entirely because of the shortage of labor, which was estimated in 1935 at between 30 and 40 per cent.<sup>11</sup> Laborers wishing to enter the country have to pay Tcs. 200, and this applies to Malays as well as to Chinese. In addition to this, a language examination acts as a further obstacle to immigration. This might seem reasonable in districts where Siamese labor exists; but it is scarcely logical in Pattani, where about 70 per cent of the population is Malay. Moreover, thousands of Chinese left the country during the depression; and the companies feel that they are entitled at least to replace them without being hampered by crushing restrictions. A petition, signed principally by Chinese mine-owners in 1936, which was endorsed by the Siamese High Commissioner, asked permission to re-import 5,000 Chinese coolies, tax-exempt. This was rejected on

the ground that the new law was eminently correct since it discriminated against no single nationality but simply aimed to maintain high living conditions for Siamese labor, which had been suffering from unemployment on a minor scale since the depression. The subsequent experiment of importing Lao labor for peninsular rubber plantations through the Labor Bureau has been only partially successful.

Since the State introduced laws to regulate the influx of Chinese labor, there has occurred much discussion as to its merits. One group argues that the Chinese have become a class apart, and that there is no danger of their undermining the position of the Siamese laboring and artisan class. By discouraging Chinese immigration, Siam is simply retarding her own development through exploitation of her minerals and rubber resources. Opponents of this view argue that the current laws are not strong enough to ward off the Chinese menace of creating a State within a State. The Government would be justified in taking far more severe measures to prevent the immigration of Chinese women, who are chiefly responsible for the assimilation problem today. Moreover, whenever there is trouble between China and Japan, a boycott creates internal disorders and strains Siam's relations with Japan. A small country like Siam must be cautious about admitting foreign capital and labor, though without the latter there is little prospect of attracting the former. At least one thing is certain; the Government cannot remain passive as the revenues from tin and rubber have become vital to the budget, not to mention the latent fears of a communist movement among the unemployed.

Certainly in the past the Siamese did not take full advantage of the cheap Chinese labor that flowed freely into the country. None but Chinese employers appreciated their intensive work for twelve hours a day at a cost—in addition to board and lodging—of Tcs. 20 a year. In their days of prosperity the Siamese farmers used to get Lao labor from the northeast at an annual cost of Tcs. 120 per head; and the Laos were infinitely inferior to the Chinese in both endurance and perseverance. But the Chinese themselves have preferred not to work on farms because they can make money faster in other fields. Chinese farmers, of course, could have been encouraged to migrate to Siam had there been proper recruiting agents in

the country; and to this day the Siamese Government has no plan for acquiring an adequate supply of farm labor. All of Siam's unexploited land cannot be farmed profitably by family labor, especially if the scale of holdings is to be in larger units than at present prevail. Siam must have cheaper and more abundant labor, or else machines; and the use of the latter would be complicated by the high price of fuel. Little realization seems to exist among Siam's legislators of the link between the fuel and immigration problems.

In central Siam, where commercialized agriculture prevails and land values are high, hired labor has already become essential. Where crops begin to be raised for sale and all surplus becomes profit, there is no limit to the amount of land a household wants to possess; thus the poor farmer in those areas finds it ever harder to acquire land of his own.<sup>12</sup>

Rural skilled labor is virtually nonexistent since nearly all of those who are employed in skilled occupations are classified as artisans and are paid on a share basis. Though it is impossible to find accurate supporting statistics, regional differences make probably the most clearcut division of Siamese labor. From this viewpoint, it may be said that agriculture is the most important form of labor in the northeast and center, whereas non-agricultural labor has greater value and prevalence in the north and in the south.

### *Costs and Types of Labor*

In the absence of adequate data, it is impossible to tell how much the cost of labor has changed over a range of years. Free labor was nonexistent for so many centuries that Crawford's estimate of its cost in 1822 was admittedly only a guess. At that time ordinary unskilled labor in Bangkok was paid  $1\frac{1}{4}$  *satangs* per day, which was at least double the current rate paid in Calcutta. Labor, Crawford concluded, was amply paid considering the few necessities of life that had to be bought in Siam.<sup>13</sup>

For years Siam maintained the reputation of being the country in which the cost of labor was higher than anywhere else in the East.<sup>14</sup> The thousands of Chinese who streamed into the country supplemented the reluctant native services. When they had saved enough money, many of the Chinese either entered trade or

returned home; and until the immigration fee was more than doubled, there was always a sufficient supply of Chinese coolies.

In 1925 a shortage of labor was felt for the first time. In the years since the depression the net increase of legal Chinese immigrants—and great numbers are smuggled in every year—has averaged annually about 10,000. In 1936–37, for example, 36,387 coolies entered Siam, as against 25,348 departing. And the recent influx due to disturbed conditions in China must be balanced against those barred by the higher immigration fee. Until recently the Siamese have been only too delighted to let these coolies perform the arduous labors of their country; but the nationalism that is cutting down their entry will undoubtedly create a shortage of labor, which will effect an important change in the wage scale.

According to the 1937 census, the total number of persons employed amounted to 6,823,556, and of unemployed to 11,425. The distribution of employment was as follows: agriculture and fishery, 88.3%; commerce, 5.2%; household and domestic service, 1.9%; mining, 0.2%; transport and communications, 0.8%; the professions, 0.7%; forestry, 0.3%; clerical work, 0.2%; public services, 0.9%. For purposes of comparison one may note that in the previous census of 1929, out of the 7,519,757 occupied persons in the country 83.05% were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry; 2.19% in industrial pursuits; 1.10% in fishing; 4.88% in domestic and other services; 0.83% in government service other than military; 1.25% in professions and as independent workers; and as many as 6.70% in "commerce, dealing, catering, etc."

The cost of agricultural labor ranges from 50 *satangs* a day in the north, to a tical in the south. If paid on a seasonal basis, farm-workers throughout the country average, in prosperous time, Tcs. 80 to Tcs. 120 for six months' services, including food and lodging. The cost of skilled labor follows the same regional wage scale. A servant for example, earns from Tcs. 10 to Tcs. 20 a month in the north, and almost double that in the south. The Chinese prefer piecework to a daily wage, but every effort to get the Siamese to change to a piecework basis has failed, despite the higher profit it would bring both laborer and employer. On a piecework basis an energetic coolie can earn as much as Tcs. 167 a month simply for dumping paddy into baskets, whereas a day laborer will get only

from Tcs. 22 to Tcs. 46 a month. Laborers are lodged but not fed, and the fluctuations in the weather and the market make almost all such employment irregular. During the depression, when the price of paddy slumped so badly, farmers succeeded in reducing the cost of their labor from 60 to 70%.<sup>15</sup> The laborer also suffered at the other end of the rice industry when the bonus paid to loading coolies at the mill was reduced by the millers, who pocketed the difference without making compensatory adjustment in the prices paid to farmers.

Early in the constitutional régime the Assembly laid down a minimum rate of pay of Tcs. 30 per month for government employees, but it refused to put manual labor on a similar basis. Permanent laborers on the state railroads petitioned the Government that their 50 *satangs* a day should be doubled. To this the Government replied that, if they were given more wages, they would spend them on opium and gambling. The Government claimed that it was trying to teach the workers thrift; but that, if they were Siamese, they persisted in incurring debts, and if they were Chinese, they were sending the money out of the country. Moreover, it added, the workers should remember that the supply of unskilled labor was unlimited compared to that of trained men; and that, if they should become too demanding, machinery could easily replace them.

According to the League of Nations survey made before the depression, the average Chinese coolie in Siam spent 50 per cent of his earnings on opium; but not one out of fifty among them was an opium smoker upon arrival in the country. There is a mild addiction among Siamese workers, but the vast majority of addicts are Chinese since it is they who do the hardest work. The League Commission thought that, if opium smoking were abolished, the problem of recreation would remain for the coolie who had money to spend and nothing to do, especially in the isolated mining areas where 70 per cent of the laborers smoke. Yet if smoking were abolished, labor would undoubtedly improve in efficiency and decline in cost. The Chinese coolie who smokes opium remains reasonably strong for a period of ten to twenty years. Men who work from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. and earn from Tcs. 150 to Tcs. 250 a month spend almost all their earnings on food and opium; and if

anything is left over, they send it back to their families in China. In the north, where smuggling opium from China is easy, it costs nothing like so much as in the south. About 80 per cent of the people there are smokers, either forest laborers who depend on illicit supplies or mountain tribes who raise their own opium.

### *Government and Labor*

When the Government put an end to the exploitation of its people through *corvée* services, it was hard pressed to find Siamese willing to labor for hire. Even the freeing of the large slave population did not solve this fundamental problem. About 1900 every one in Bangkok was complaining of the rising cost of living, which had both general and specific causes, chiefly the current silver situation. But in Bangkok it had an interesting effect on the labor problem. The king, who was anxious to see his new palace of Dusit built as rapidly as possible, offered double the wages then paid by the Public Works Department and in this way deprived this far more useful service of the little labor it could find. The general result was a rise in wages and in the cost of all merchandise.

The shortage of labor for public works led the Government to modify its early paternal legislation by reasserting its right to requisition labor—but at fixed prices. The preamble to this amendment stated that, since some people are by nature industrious and others lazy, the State must encourage the former. A high commissioner was appointed with discretionary powers on the question of exempting from compulsory labor any person who was noticeably industrious in useful labor or who had done compulsory labor for the State for a long period of time.

Convict labor was originally drafted as the only means of getting public works accomplished, but it later came to be employed chiefly in crafts. In the country jails a fine quality of hats, wicker furniture, basketry, and lacquer work is still being made. This practise has the advantage of developing industries at low cost and of disseminating craftsmanship among the rural people,<sup>16</sup> but it has inevitably competed to a minor extent with local tradesmen; moreover, there has been no standardization or large scale production, and marketing methods are poor. A few attempts were made to sell the output to the public; but the prices were too high, and

no publicity was given to the venture. When potential clients wrote to the Pattani jail to order furniture, for instance, they had to wait two or three months for the order to be filled. A revival of the use of convict labor for public works occurred in 1937, when the new-born municipalities found regular labor too expensive to hire; the Government lent them the inmates of the local jails, who were paid at the rate of 10 *satangs* a day.

One of the first attempts at government control of labor, in all Oriental countries where there is a large European colony, is in the regulation of the servant problem. Foreigners had become so vocal about the thievery of their servants and about the State's inability to bring these delinquents to justice that the police circularized foreign residents in May 1901 in regard to a servants' registration bureau. Initiative was thereby thrown on the employers, who were required to bring their servants to the bureau for fingerprint identification and later to send in information as to the time and cause of their dismissal. However, two months after the bureau was opened, only 67 out of the 209 employers who had promised to support the move had even partially complied with the rules. The Hylam Chinese, who formed the vast majority of the servant body, objected strongly; and nobody troubled to register the stray Malay, Siamese, or Indian servants, who had not reacted so adversely. The problem has remained unsolved to this day.

The second step in government labor control was a series of regulations dealing with the ricksha traffic. In 1913 regulations were issued obliging ricksha pullers to register and to pay a fee of 3 *satangs* for a license, which was only issued to those who were physically fit, between the ages of eighteen and forty, and sufficiently conversant with the Siamese language to be able to follow directions.

Although Chinese coolies went on strike a few times around the turn of the century, their action was linked to that of the secret societies and handled as such. The lightermen's strike of January 1900 was an example of this. In general, the early Chinese immigrants were assimilated to the Siamese and became industrious and exemplary citizens; moreover, they solved the labor problem which at the time was one of shortage and not of competition. One of the few examples of competition in Siam's labor history was the



struggle between an English company and the Menam boatmen. The steam ferryboats installed by the foreign company interfered with a long-established native transportation system.<sup>17</sup> To win back their clientele, which had deserted *en masse* to the company's boats, the Bangkok boatmen offered to transport passengers free for six months. As a result, they were able to reestablish their old tariff and incidentally to put the intruding company into bankruptcy.

In general, the Government had little cause to intervene in the labor situation. There were no parts of the country where economic conditions were truly bad, and only an occasional rice famine moved the Government to action. In 1917, when conditions in the central provinces were especially hard for the seasonal Lao laborers, who could find no work there, the Government took the novel step of supplying relief work. The Irrigation Department agreed to provide work at the regular wage, along with food and lodging, to all laborers who offered their services. Provincial authorities were asked to notify distressed regions and to provide transportation for the workers to the scene of their future labors. The number of applicants reached 2,500 at the Nong Quai project, and the authorities declared themselves well satisfied with the results.

Until the depression, government intervention in labor situations was almost entirely confined to specific emergencies and immediate problems. There was little appreciation of the danger of forming an exclusively Siamese white collar class, and no real attempt was made to train Siamese labor in techniques or to overcome their general reluctance towards any work other than the civil service. However, the closing of the gaming houses in 1917 and the growth of crime in the provinces in the 1920's brought some slight consciousness of the economic and social problems of labor.

In Siam the labor situation reverses that of the West. For it is the Siamese bourgeois who works; and it is the peasant who has many unoccupied months, which he spends in drinking, gaming, and dacoity. Mild exhortations were made to the middle classes to take up scientific farming, especially by Prince Siddhiporn; but they continued to yearn for official posts and to despise manual labor. The over-staffing of the civil service under Rama VI was followed

by Prajadhipok's purge; and this created the first real employment problem among the bourgeoisie. Perhaps it was this situation that stimulated the Board of Commercial Development's abortive proposal to form a Labor Bureau in 1929, which in the following years would have found so much more cause for existence. It was already obvious, before the depression extended the problem to include unskilled labor, that the number of educated Siamese exceeded the number of government jobs available, and that they would either have to accept serious pay cuts and provincial posts or else train for more technical employment. A survey of coolie unemployment, taken by the Minister of the Interior in 1931, revealed that, at a conservative estimate, there were 4,267 unskilled laborers out of work in Bangkok alone.<sup>18</sup>

In their first manifesto of June 1932, the revolutionaries accused the absolute monarchy of having neglected the employment problem and promised to solve it themselves. Rules for setting up labor bureaux under the Ministry of the Interior were drawn up in July; but the first step towards their establishment was not taken until the end of the year, and then only because uncontrolled agencies were unscrupulously exploiting the jobless. Just how much these bureaux have helped the situation is unknown. When the Minister of Economic Affairs was under fire in the Assembly in October 1935, he stated that the Government had assisted over 3,000 laborers to get employment in the Department of Public Works and on rubber estates and that only 200 were still left on their unemployed lists. But on January 10, 1938, in answer to direct questioning, the Government was non-committal.

Siam did not feel the slump till later than most countries since much of her agriculture was still self-sufficing and therefore unaffected by market prices; moreover, the monasteries absorbed a certain number of the unemployed. It was not until the spring of 1933 that the Government took its first constructive step by providing work for 1,200 laborers on the construction of a road of dubious utility from Paknam to Bangsue. But this by no means absorbed all the unemployed; and when, in August, it looked as if this artificial absorption had reached its limit, the Government circularized the Ministries to discover what additional assistance they could give to relieve unemployment. The two groups most seri-

ously affected by the lack of jobs were unskilled laborers and those trained for clerical positions.

An interesting indirect effort at relief through cooperation with private companies was attempted by the Government at about the same time. The best wages in Bangkok were and are paid by private firms, almost all of which are in foreign hands. Realizing its responsibility for having created an educational system that trained boys chiefly for government jobs, the State now tried to remedy its negligence in the matter of training skilled labor. The school curriculum was revised to give more vocational training, and it was proposed that the foreign firms take in boys who would be apprenticed to definite commercial and industrial careers and would not simply supply these firms with cheap labor. A few days later the Government was able to list nineteen private concerns, affording a wide range of employment, that had been willing to create such openings. The Government now has a definite policy in its determination to limit the growth of the white collar class.

Early in 1934 these same foreign firms were somewhat alienated by the projection of a scheme for the development of semi-governmental enterprises covering the whole economic field. In these enterprises, it was proposed that the Government should hold 51 per cent of the capital and Siamese nationals 25 per cent, while the remaining 24 per cent would be available to foreigners. But like so many official projects—as, for example, the plan to initiate cotton cultivation in order to give employment—it remained exclusively on paper for a few years more. The only constructive step taken at the time was an attempt to collect statistics on unemployment by opening a register for unemployed workmen at their respective *amphur* headquarters. All laborers seeking government work must be employed through these *amphur* bureaux. Since the date of their opening, however, only a few thousand unemployed have registered.

Under the old régime, labor troubles, apart from secret societies, were practically unknown; but an important effect of the *coup d'état* was that it encouraged opposition to all forms of authority. Heretofore the people had generally accepted whatever favors their superiors chose to give them, and all attempts at opposition had been rigidly suppressed. But the new Government's free promises provoked a series of strikes between August and October 1932

among ricksha pullers, tramway employees, and women dyers, and even in two of Bangkok's leading schools.

The most remarkable was that of the ricksha coolies, who had no insurance against starvation or deportation and no legal protection except on grounds of general assault and battery. Men who fought each other over a single *satang* had finally united to demand better treatment from the owners of the rickshas, who charged them the outrageous rental of 40 *satangs* a day. A compromise was effected, partly through the pressure of hunger. Although the Government had taken a stand only a few days before against the innumerable petitions it had been receiving in order to prove that it was not going to be intimidated by the laboring class, there was appreciation of the importance of this strike. It was realized that the police must no longer be the sole agency to deal with labor troubles. The women laborers at the dye factory won their strike, which had been called as a result of a cut in wages from 40 to 30 *satangs* a day.

Beginning in November 1932, a strike simmered in the oldest of Siam's industrial enterprises, the Siam Electric Company, over the dismissal of some tramway workers and an alteration in contracts. The tramway workers were the oldest labor group in Siam, and their skeleton organization dated back to 1897. Three years after its formation they had even gone on strike, on the Chinese secret society pattern. When the constitutional régime came into power, they were naturally the first to organize an embryo trade union, consisting of about three hundred men. The union's aim was to teach thrift, help the aged and crippled, and stabilize the livelihood of its members. The Government was asked to register the union, and this was done in October 1932 with great ceremony. The Minister of the Interior delivered an address; Prince Sakol praised the Buddhist spirit of cooperation; and monks chanted incantations.

The Government felt that it must not appear indifferent to the first legal association of Siamese workers, but it tried by its patronage to turn it into a kind of boy scout movement. The workers, however, were not content with that. When the Siam Electric Company would not recognize the union's committee in connection with dismissal grievance, the Government was twice asked by the

workmen to intervene. The Government protested that the Association's registered aims did not include such interference, but the Minister of the Interior agreed to review the situation. Little more was done than to ask the Siam Electric Company to do the square thing by the workers and to tell the union that the Government saw nothing unreasonable in the company's regulations—in short, the men were merely advised to go back to work. However, the most important part of the Minister's action was not his banal advice about cooperation, but his promise that, if any injustice should be done in the future, the State Councillor would consider the matter. The union at once began to take more of an interest in the political situation. Its representative called on Phya Bahol just before his 1933 *coup d'état* and sent a telegram to the king asking him to return to the capital.

During the next few years a series of minor strikes occurred. In December 1934 Bangkok taxi-drivers struck for higher wages and against the parking regulations; and in July 1935 the drivers of the hundred buses between Chiengrai and Lampang struck for, and won, an increase in fares. In August 1936 two hundred mining coolies at Yala struck unsuccessfully against a 10 per cent wage cut.

In contrast to these isolated strikes, two others of major importance occurred simultaneously at Bangkok early in 1934 among the rice mill coolies and the railroad workers.

Mill strikes were not a complete novelty in Siam, but never before had there been a strike on so large a scale. The immediate issue was the restoration of a bonus at the Chinese New Year, which the employers claimed they were unable to pay in view of the fall in paddy prices. The Chinese strikers asked the head of the Tramway Association to intercede, as representative of the only organized labor group in the country, and petitioned the Government to intervene, if not to take over the mills entirely. In a statement issued to the public they maintained that they merely wanted the welfare of the Siamese nation. The administration expressed its willingness to effect a reconciliation, but the result was the rejection of the strikers' demands.

Before this strike was settled, a similar but short-lived disturbance occurred among the railroad employees. The train service in Bangkok was suddenly suspended one morning, and the laborers

took over the trains and the railroad offices in the city. A poster was put up stating that the railroad authorities had no sense of justice and that the Government would see that order was restored by replacing them by army officers. Discontent among the lower employees at the favoritism of the Minister of Economic Affairs was of long standing. When he came in haste to address the workers, chiding them for their hasty action, his speech was interrupted by vociferous objections. He was accused of holding aloof from labor, in spite of the socialism he always advocated in his press articles. The strikers would not move until the Premier himself arrived. He stated that he would meet their demands half way by appointing army officers to run the railroads temporarily and by setting up a committee to examine their grievances. The strikers gladly accepted this proposal and returned to work.

Out of the railroad settlement came the creation of a permanent committee to deal with labor problems. Though this committee was criticized as being made up mainly of those favoring labor, the chairmanship of the Governor of Bangkok guaranteed its aloofness from politics. Many feared that the very existence of such a committee would encourage labor to think itself badly treated and create artificial grievances. The best paid labor was undeniably that of private firms; and since the Government had no spotless record as an employer, its assumption of the moral right to arbitrate was certainly open to criticism. In the opinion of the conservatives, labor was no legitimate experimental field for apprentice politicians.

But it was the laborers themselves who more and more forced their way into the political arena. In 1937 thirteen labor candidates presented themselves for the elections. One group, composed chiefly of taxi drivers, who formed themselves into a Winged Wheel Party, raised enough money to put forward a candidate, to the great astonishment of Bangkok. Labor was awakening, at least locally, to a sense of its own importance.

Although the organizers of the two major strikes were both Siamese and formerly members of the Labor Section of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the fact that the rice mill coolies were Chinese had paramount importance in the decision to deport seven of their ringleaders in May 1934. This strike raised the whole issue of foreign labor in Siam, and for the first time public interest

focussed on the question. The Government realized that it must move warily since the numerical predominance of foreign labor gave it the power to create an awkward situation. Accordingly, it began a detailed survey of the labor situation in 1937 with a view to replacing Chinese by Siamese labor as far as possible.

Although the avowed aim of both the Government and the Assembly is to raise the general standards of labor, the former is far more interested than the latter in making Siamese wages and housing, which differ now from firm to firm, conform to international standards. In January 1938 a bill was introduced into the Assembly for fixing the minimum age limit at fifteen years, establishing a minimum wage, reducing hours of work from the eleven now prevalent to eight, and introducing sickness and accident insurance and pay for overtime. This bill was defeated by the overwhelming majority of sixty-two votes to twenty-eight. Nor did a bill to stop the exploitation of child labor meet with any more success although it was admitted that the match factories employed boys of five or six years of age, who should, under the policy of universal primary education, have been in school. In 1939 a Factory Act was passed providing for certain health safeguards, but no provisions were included for the regulation of hours and wages.

Nationalism rather than internationalism colors the attitude of Siam's legislators towards labor. Since 90 per cent of the wage-laborers in Siam are foreign, the Government has no intention of spending large sums to improve their economic condition. It favors any enterprise, foreign or Siamese, that will agree to hire a certain proportion of Siamese workmen; and only the scarcity of such labor keeps it from making this compulsory for all industrial undertakings. A bill introduced into the Assembly in August 1938 for the reservation to Siamese of certain fields of labor, chiefly in mechanized transport, was supported by a large majority. In both the labor bills of 1938, the attitude of the administration was one of disapproval; it considered that all labor legislation should await the results of the labor survey and that both the bills introduced in the Assembly were too rigid to suit the varying labor conditions in industrial Bangkok and the farming communities.

The whole labor movement, in so far as it has become self-conscious and has received official attention, is confined to the

industrial workers of Bangkok, who form only about 1 per cent of the total laboring population. Conditions among the agricultural workers are not only different but far worse, particularly in the Rangsit area. Nothing has been done either to improve their status or to assure a more abundant supply of farm labor for the development of Siam's vast uncultivated lands, which is a cardinal point in the new régime's program. Although the population is increasing at a phenomenal rate, it cannot keep pace with the need for an even more rapid increase in the size of farm holdings. Farming, to be profitable, must be done on a large scale. The alternative to cheaper labor is the use of mechanical power; but this is difficult in the case of rice farming, and the cost of fuel puts it at present out of the question. There is no point in cutting down Chinese immigration if the problem of its replacement has not been previously solved.





## PART III



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## XVIII · RELIGION

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### BUDDHISM

#### *Siamese Buddhism*

[Probably just before the Christian era, the Thais brought with them into northern Siam the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which had permeated China from India. Hinayana, the southern form of Buddhism, apparently also made its way into the Indo-China peninsula at about the same time; and by the fifth century A.D. it was firmly established in the regions that are now Siam, Cambodia, and Burma, thanks to a series of missions sent from Ceylon, which weighted the scales in favor of the Hinayana form. It dominated but did not displace Brahmanism, then the religion of the ruling class; nor did it eliminate the animistic beliefs of the majority of the people.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism's remarkable tolerance and powers of absorption readily harmonized all existing beliefs under the more or less nominal leadership of Buddha, and its monasticism gave a religious organization to the whole cosmogony. Brahmanism has survived to this day, not solely in the descendants of the once powerful court Brahmans and in certain ceremonials, but as a definite religion in the region around Nakon Sritemmerat and to a very minor degree in Bangkok itself. Brahma and Indra are the two Indian deities that have survived, not only in the Buddhist pantheon, but as the inspirers of certain principles of Siamese law, as embodied in the ancient book of *Lak Inthepat*.<sup>2</sup> Indra's disk-like weapon, the Chakra, occupies a prominent place in Siamese mythology and art forms.

Buddhism is essentially an ethical code and as such has appealed more than other Indian religions to the majority of the Siamese. Hinduism, with its code of temporal laws and customs, was the instrument of government and more generally the religion of the administrators.<sup>3</sup> Because each had its own sphere of action, there

was no cause for friction or antagonism; a Siamese king would resort to Buddhism in spiritual matters but strictly follow the precepts of Hinduism in temporal affairs and in ceremonial.

Like other Buddhist countries, Siam had evolved her own version of the life of Buddha and its assorted mythology. The standard Siamese work on Buddhist cosmogony is the *Traiphoom*, compiled in sixty volumes from presumably classical sources in 1776 by Phya Tak. Once regarded as sacred, these "Three Places of Earth, Heavens, and Hells," are now deemed absurd and irrelevant to the essential doctrines by modern Buddhists, who insist that Buddhism itself offers no intellectual obstacle to the acceptance of scientific truth. The vast majority of Siamese are quite ignorant of the *Traiphoom*, and their cosmic ideas are based on the Brahmanic wonderland or derived from the sermons of monks and the gruesome paintings on temple walls.

#### *The Buddhist Church and the Siamese State*

The Buddhist clergy have always been content to exercise a purely religious influence over an easily led people. Anything like an ecclesiastical hierarchy is a comparatively modern development, which could not have existed before, since it would have been considered a menace to the king's absolute power. Hinayana Buddhism was opposed from the outset to the acquisition of temporal power by its monks. Only a small proportion of those entering the monasteries intended to make it a life vocation, and those who did became scholars of Buddhist learning.<sup>4</sup> As compensation for its failure to acquire political power, the order received gifts ranging from temples and lands to food and clothing, not only from the king but from the humblest peasant. Slaves worked for them, and they were exempt from taxes and military service. These privileges were so abused that the kings from time to time had to sort out the shirkers and the ignorant and return them to the world. But royal intervention was usually superfluous as the order's internal discipline was very effective. Siamese monasteries never sank so low as did European monasteries during certain periods of ecclesiastical history. Nor was an effort made to detain the majority of Siamese, who preferred, after a few months, to re-enter secular life.

*Hierarchy and Organization*

It was Ram Gamheng who made Buddhism the Thai religion. The king retained power over the appointments to high ecclesiastical office, and as head of the State he enforced secular law among the members of the order.<sup>5</sup> Yet as regards inner organization—as regulated by the law of Buddha—the order was self-governing; the king was merely its lay defender. When, exceptionally, a king like the mad Phya Tak interfered within the order, drastic measures had to be taken by his royal successors and by the ecclesiastical authorities to restore normal discipline.

In 1577 it was definitely stated that the administration of the order for the first time would be divided into a northern and a southern section. Although this arrangement persisted, it remained so embryonic in form that in the seventeenth century La Loubère remarked on the absence of any religious hierarchy; and this continued to be the state of affairs until Mongkut's reforms in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The Patriarch, or head of the church, was selected from among the four abbots, who were in turn chosen from among the heads of the royal monasteries. Each abbot, with his assistant, administered one of the four great ecclesiastical divisions. The northern and southern departments were based on a geographical division; and not until Mongkut's time were the two last divisions added, along the lines of the reformed, or Dhammayuthika monks, and the unreformed, or Mahanikaya clergy. In addition to these were the Vipasanadhurah, or hermit monks, who differed from their Mahanikaya colleagues in placing emphasis on meditation rather than upon teaching.

The fourteen abbots and their assistants formed a church assembly, as constituted by the ecclesiastical law of 1902, which acts as a final court in general matters as well as in individual cases.<sup>6</sup> Less important are those monks who are in charge of the non-royal *wats*, though all higher offices are filled by men who have passed through the nine grades of proficiency in the Pali language and are versed in the *Tripitaka* and its commentaries. The heads of the royal monasteries were appointed with ceremony by the king at the beginning of each reign.<sup>7</sup> The lesser heads of the ordinary

monasteries were appointed by the donor of the temple to which they were attached and were selected on the basis of proficiency in the Pali scriptures. Public examinations were held triennially in the palaces; and the honorary title bestowed on the survivors of this nine-day grill was *Pareean*, which in turn was divided into several degrees of honor.<sup>8</sup>

The head abbot exercised little jurisdiction over the monks, but he made periodic reports to the king and presided over assemblies. Breaches of discipline were judged by the heads of the monasteries, and in serious cases by the highest dignitaries sitting as an ecclesiastical court. In case of serious crime, the delinquent monk was first expelled from the order and then handed over to the secular arm.

From the age of twenty to forty-five Mongkut was a priest in one of the contemplative orders. He served there a veritable political as well as religious novitiate, and the ecclesiastical reforms he came to sponsor were analogous to his later political changes. Passing from one monastery to another, he became renowned for his knowledge of the country as well as of the scriptures; and he later preached against the doctrines that had crept into Siamese Buddhism which were opposed to common sense and natural science. Further, he pressed for reform of the abuses that had pervaded the priesthood; discipline was so relaxed and the monks so idle that they were making the order ridiculous and undignified.

Mongkut was not so interested in promoting Pali scholarship as had been his predecessor Nang Klao, and in his reign *Pareeans* of the first and second degree became very scarce. One great cause was the marked diminution in the numbers of men entering the priesthood because of the new and extraordinary openings that Mongkut was creating in civil life. Not that the king was indifferent to the fate of Buddhism, as was shown by the reformed sect that he launched. In this it was hoped to ally true scholarship with a minute regard for discipline; he named it *Dhammaut*, or those strictly bound by the law.

He preached that religion must cease to be a mechanical repetition of formulae; spirit worship and superstition must be eliminated from the ceremonies, which had taken on the character of popular entertainments. His reforms gave a utilitarian orientation to

Siamese Buddhism, which was to be purged of futile metaphysical speculation and strengthened ethically to resist the encroachments of Occidental religions. To effect this essential revival of primitive Buddhism, Mongkut organized religious instruction in Siam and encouraged *wat* schools.

More of a free-thinker than even his liberal father, Chulalongkorn contented himself with centralizing church administration by bringing it into line with the other institutions of the kingdom that were then being modernized. The new and comprehensive law that he evolved in 1902 confirmed the priestly hierarchy, the council of the four royal abbots, and the power of the general assembly to act as an ecclesiastical tribunal, to appoint the heads of lesser monasteries, and to discuss canonical problems. The educational function of the *wat* was much stressed. It was the business of the abbot to see that all young persons living in the neighborhood of a *wat* should receive their training there. The Government also showed a new interest in the administration of church property, and to this end the civil and the religious authorities cooperated to appoint an agent to collect *wat* revenues and to keep a strict account of monkish expenditures. The order was forbidden to lend money in the name of any *wat* or of its abbot without the express permission of the Government.

Rama VI was the third successive king to show an active interest in Buddhism, but his was of a new kind. Unlike his grandfather, he had no desire to restore the pristine doctrines and discipline of Buddhism; nor did he reorganize the ecclesiastical hierarchy and laws as his father had done. But he actively propagated Buddhism as a national religion that would unite the country and support the administration's policy. Buddhism was even harnessed into endorsing Siam's participation in the world war—a radical manipulation of Buddha's precept against the taking of life. Being a patriotic Siamese was made tantamount to being a good Buddhist. Prajadhipok carried on his father's and his brother's policies, but with special emphasis on the link between Buddhism and education.

### *The Economic Role of Buddhism*

Originally Siamese monks were probably vagrant, shabbily-clad mendicants in the pure Buddhist tradition. The periodicity of the



monsoons must have required some simple seasonal shelter, which the pious inhabitants of a region, anxious to acquire merit, gladly built for them. There they stayed and preached the law in return for communal alms. In time these crude shelters became the established dwelling places of the monks; and though they continued the traveling tradition in the dry season, especially to visit shrines, these journeys became excursions from a permanent base. Building monasteries and temples has always been a widespread means of making merit in Siam, with the result that the church has come to derive considerable income from its properties, in addition to the revenues allotted by the crown for the monasteries' support.

The accounts of Colquhoun, Crawford, and some of the missionaries in the nineteenth century, gave the impression that Siamese Buddhism was an effete institution and its priests a vast army of drones, whose monasteries were sunk in the worst immorality and without any influence over the people. It was chiefly the lack of durable building materials in Siam, along with the failure to repair *wats* and *prachedis*, that led observers to such wrong conclusions. Until very recently no merit was attached to the repair of a *wat*, and a great deal to the building of a new one—regardless of its artistic merits or whether or not material from an older temple was used in its construction.

Usually Europeans have admired the *wats* of Bangkok, which from the outset were the richest and best cared for, especially during the last few reigns when an increasing effort has been made to preserve them by attaching merit to the repair of family *wats*. The whole trend of *wat* building has been discouraged by the constitutional Government; more merit is to be acquired through socially useful expenditures than in the building of more temples and *prachedis*.

Although the people to this day are proud of their *wats* and glad to contribute to their upkeep, new and distracting factors have crept in. Other expenditures seem more vital, and new means of diversion are available to the people. In many ways the former role of the *wat* is being assumed by the Government, which in turn is getting restless about the unproductive aspects of Buddhism.

In the Lao country most of the *wats* were built in the time of

the Mon and Burmese domination between 1558 and 1774, and numerically only Ayuthia and Bangkok can compete with this northern output. In the center of Siam there is one temple to every 800 persons; in the south, one to 863; in the east, one to 500; and in the north, one to 446. The latest official estimate lists 18,006 monasteries for the whole country.<sup>9</sup> In the old days temple building was a comparatively light and inexpensive task. But it is now becoming far more expensive; and as repairs have become a state responsibility, the few temples that will be constructed in the future will probably be built under official auspices. By an ancient and sacred law temple land is inalienable and inviolable. In the old days it was thought that instant death would be the punishment of the impious man who built his house next to a temple site, even if the temple were dilapidated; but now such retribution is less dreaded.

Not only is the country in this way deprived of much productive and untaxable land; but the economic drain involved in the support of 225,292 monks and novices, 4,518 students in Pali schools, and almost 100,000 temple attendants, is an important and positive factor, especially when allied to the economic unproductivity of all this idle man-power. It has been calculated that the earnings of every group of sixteen Siamese males goes to the support of one priest.<sup>10</sup> The daily cost of feeding a priest is one tical, which is the highest wage paid to a day laborer; and in addition to this there are other expenses, such as the cost of their scanty yellow robes. (Incidentally the name of *talapoin*, derived from the *talapat*, or yellow robe, worn by Buddha's followers because it was then the color of outcasts, was given them by Europeans; the monks call themselves *phras*.) Harvey's calculation of the cost of their upkeep just before the depression, Tcs. 107,825,862, is certainly exaggerated; for he contended that every individual contributed Tcs. 10.5, in addition to other sums for temples and ceremonies. Zimmerman's far more accurate report, dealing with the same period, showed that religious rites cost Tcs. 28 per family in the center of Siam, Tcs. 11 in the north, Tcs. 8 in the south, and Tcs. 5 in the northeast.<sup>11</sup> These sums represented, in their proportion to other living expenses, an almost identical sacrifice for the preservation of religion throughout all sections of the country.

In 1934 the report of another expert revealed ecclesiastical costs as being far higher and more widespread in rural than in urban Siam, and also greater than the sums spent on clothing and household articles in all areas. It showed the relatively greater importance of the temple to the life of the agricultural population in the form of education, hospitality to travelers, and maintenance of the community's moral tone.

The social importance of the temple to the rural Siamese is fully equal to the amount that it costs them, and by far the greater part of the expense is borne by those who best can afford it.<sup>12</sup>

Yet whatever the exact figures may be, the cost is a heavy one for a poor people; and it shows the great hold that Buddhism continues to have over the Siamese. Cremation costs are particularly heavy, especially for royalty and nobility; and in Siam it costs more to be burned than to be married. Mongkut's funeral cost \$150,000; but his successor asked for a simpler ceremony and that the money saved thereby be given to every school, hospital, and church in Siam, regardless of creed.

### *The Social Role of Buddhism*

The continued vitality of Buddhism in a changing Siam is due to its close integration with the life of the people, which has permitted it to flourish despite the encroachments of Islam and Christianity. A man cannot be educated, become adolescent, be married, build a house, recover from an illness, plant or harvest a crop, prepare a meal, die or be cremated, without some religious rite. Every village has a *wat* of some sort, which serves as church, town hall, hotel, recreation center, school, crematorium, and home for the aged and poor. Most important of all in its interweaving with the social system is the minimum novitiate of three months that every Siamese boy serves in a monastery. The women of the family urge their remaining longer as they can acquire merit only through having a son as priest or through rebirth as a man. The first thing a Siamese child is taught to do is to revere the Buddha, the law, and the order. Though there are a few princes and retired officials to be found among the monks, the vast majority have always been freemen; for slaves have never been admitted.

The practice of withdrawing from the world to live apart a life of austerity, humility, and meditation solely for the benefit of oneself is highly revered by the Siamese. But there is a charming and debonair quality about Siamese devoutness. The informality with which an ordination is carried out has struck most uninitiated observers as irreverence. The easy-going open air quality about most Buddhist ceremonies shows that merit-making is not necessarily burdensome. When a monk recites a formula with a cigarette in his mouth, no disrespect is meant. Crawford was astonished to find that monks went in for secular hobbies like collecting herbs and minerals, music, painting, and boat-building. On the temple walls profane pictures are mingled with sacred since the Siamese are indifferent to subject matter when ornamentation is the objective. The decay in which sacred objects or buildings are allowed to fall does not detract from the veneration in which they continue to be held.

The novice at his ordination usually gets tangled up while changing his robes, to the evident amusement of the betel-chewing audience. He is solemnly asked by the abbot if he is over twenty years of age; if he is free from mental and contagious diseases and debts, which he often enters a monastery to escape; if he has ever been bewitched, a slave, or a fugitive from justice or military service; and finally if he has obtained his parents' consent. After giving satisfactory replies, the novice takes vows not to steal, destroy life, lie, or eat at forbidden times; not to use perfumes, ornaments, or a high or broad bed; and not to receive gold or silver. He must also vow to abstain from impurity, intoxicating drinks, dancing, music, the theatre, and travel except in the dry weather. He is then pronounced accepted by the order, and a list of his duties as well as the sins that he must avoid is read aloud by the abbot. Many of the traditional sins are now omitted, such as inhaling the scent of flowers, conversing on any but religious topics, over-eating and over-sleeping, swinging the arms when walking or riding an elephant, putting a flower behind the ear, whistling, and washing in the dark. Five sins are mortal if committed by either priest or layman: murdering either of one's parents, treating Buddha's temples or precepts with contempt, and persuading priests to act falsely. Monks are expelled for sexual

intercourse, theft, and murder; and slight punishments like sweeping the courtyard are assigned for peccadillos that are confessed voluntarily at the semi-monthly monastic meetings. Discipline in the royal monasteries is more severe. In the ecclesiastical courts, where serious offenses are tried, priests who are found guilty are unfrocked, publicly flogged, and expelled from the order.

The vast majority follow the rule, live continently and generally sinlessly, and meditate—the chief business of the monk—perhaps rather vaguely. Some are scholars and saints, and others are charlatans; but the average standard is high. Daily life is ordered by a routine that is not crushing. Aside from a few well-defined duties, the monks have much time at their disposal. A monk is officially permitted to possess eight objects, and in practice a few more. Even their detractors admit that Siamese monks are amiable, kindly, and hospitable, without being forced to undertake any specific charity or public philanthropy.

Before daylight the monk must rise, wash himself, and sweep his cell and the courtyard around the bo-tree, after which he fetches and filters his drinking water. After he has meditated upon his own weakness as compared with Buddha's virtues, and placed flowers before the sacred image, he takes his begging bowl with him into the village where he collects rice; he must not thank the donors since by doing so he would neutralize the merit they had thereby acquired. After he has eaten—and the monk can eat but once a day and only before noon—he meditates and studies the sacred books. At sunset he has another burst of sweeping energy, lights the lamps, and listens to his superior's teaching. No distinction is made between rich and poor novices, who do almost all the manual labor.

Nuns in Siam are usually ancient ladies, beyond temptation or tired of it, and without living relatives. Never a flourishing group and one held in nothing like the same respect as the priesthood, these nuns do no teaching, but only sewing and manual labor. Their rules of conduct are not strict, and they generally live in the reflected glory of a nearby monastery.

The monastery is the greatest leveler in the kingdom. Once a monk, the poorest peasant is on a spiritual level with the king. As part of the general fluidity of his relations with the people, a monk

may leave and re-enter his monastery at will. The mere quality of being a monk excites great respect in the spiritual democracy of Buddhist Siam. One English explorer was astonished at the reverence all his boatmen paid to one of their colleagues after he had donned the yellow robe.<sup>18</sup> Out of a group of more than ten thousand monks who have left the priesthood, only seventeen have been sentenced for crimes, of which only two were serious.

Certain Buddhist rules are so palpably impractical, such as the prohibition against killing insects, that the Siamese tend to interpret them in a commonsense vein; and in other ways the spirit of compromise oils the wheels. For example, although magic is contrary to Buddhist tenets, the people have great faith in charms, especially if monks have made them. Their respect for the monks is in no way diminished thereby, and the value of the charm is enhanced; for its efficacy depends on the sanctity of the maker. Even after they leave the monastery, ex-monks keep in touch with it on the forty-eight Buddhist festivals, when they visit the temple with flower offerings; and at irregular intervals they listen to the sermons given by the monks.

Buddhism permeates the people's lives to such an extent that limits to its influence cannot be marked off. What Buddhism lacks in intensity it compensates through the diffusion of a mild and gentle spirit. It has been eminently useful to an autocratic government by instilling in the people a cheerful humility and forbearance that has kept them submissive and loyal to the throne. It is the religion of a tired and undynamic, rather than of an aggressive, people. It trains for good citizenship, though not on an heroic or romantic scale. Responsibility for the individual's actions rests wholly with himself, and good and evil bring their respective rewards. Buddhism not only fosters self-control but forbids cruelty and the persecution of others. Free intercourse with other peoples is not hampered by racial or caste isolation, and this has enabled the Thais to assimilate other nationalities and their cultures.

The average Siamese has no grasp of abstract ideas about the soul; his highest concept of spirit as divorced from matter is analogous to that of the Roman *manes*. The upper-class Siamese are politely sceptical. It is all a highly concrete and materialistic affair; prosperity is regarded as the recompense of former virtue,

adversity as the punishment for former vice. Veneration for the king was partly based on the idea that some former phenomenal worth must have brought him to his present high estate. For the vast majority of Siamese merit-making is the sum and substance of lay Buddhism, and even in this respect they are moderate. A Siamese servant once told his master that he wanted to make merit, but not too much since that would get him to Nirvana too soon; he wanted to make just enough to achieve re-birth as a royal prince, in which role he could have lots of wives, money, and fun.<sup>14</sup>

The religious observances of a zealous Buddhist family begin early in the morning and end late at night. Though not so meticulous as those of Confucianism nor so detailed as those of Hinduism, they are, if carefully followed, enough to keep the mind on religion for most of the day. After the early prayer food is prepared to fill the monks' begging bowls, and a lookout must be kept for them since they do not knock but only stand and wait with averted heads.<sup>15</sup> At least once a day offerings must be placed before the domestic shrine, and more occasionally at the *wat*. The pious Buddhist will also attend the weekly prayer service at the *wat* and read the pamphlets on ethical questions distributed there.

Ostentatious merit-making is common to all classes of Siamese, and the anonymity that Buddhism encourages in its artists contrasts with the flaunting of merit-makers' names. At the festival of *Throt Kathin* the king made annual offerings to the principal temples throughout the country, accompanied by more than a hundred state barges, musicians, and every kind of display. Those who can afford to do the same, even on a very minor scale, do so. Even paupers will from time to time invite two or three monks to receive some worthless presents at their huts and will proclaim their generosity by beating a drum for hours before and after.<sup>16</sup> In judging this type of altruism one must remember that philanthropy in the Western sense is not so necessary in a country where no one need starve; there is no analogous call on one's compassion. Charity to relatives and hospitality to strangers are cardinal principles of Siamese Buddhism, which has also been productive of a high degree of social morality, though of a passive kind. On the positive side it has influenced Siamese legislation to the extent of penalizing the breaking of Buddha's commandments; but these essentially demo-

cratic rulings have in their turn been modified by Brahmanic theories of social privilege, which varies with the quality of the persons juridically involved.

*The Interaction of Christianity with Buddhism*

Both Mongkut and his Phraklang used to discuss religion with the missionaries to the ultimate conversion of neither side, and, sometimes to the loss of Christian temper. When one Protestant medical missionary was asked if he were not wrong in trying to cure the diseases that his omniscient deity had created, he left in anger saying that his interlocutor was hard to reach.<sup>17</sup> Investigation of Roman Catholicism was equally unsatisfactory to the Phraklang: he found it unable to explain doubtful and difficult matters. Yet he politely admitted that modern Buddhists were much indebted to the missionaries for information. He admired Christian morality so greatly that the missionaries yielded once more to the temptation of mistaking Buddhist courtesy for imminent conversion. Then he told them that Buddha, too, had taught a morality as beautiful as theirs and a charity that extended to every living object. When they spoke of faith, he answered that by the light of their knowledge they had helped him to weed out his own superstitions, but that he would accept no new ones. Yet it was undoubtedly the effect of Protestant missionary zeal on Buddhism that provoked Mongkut's sectarian reforms.

When the missionaries changed their tactics from doctrinal skirmishes to exemplifying the Christian ideal of disinterested service, their influence began to make headway. Cultured Siamese recognized that the passivity of Buddhism was no longer appropriate to their changing world and that to survive at all it needed Christianity's vitalizing force. Chulalongkorn was perfectly willing for his subjects to choose the religion they preferred; in his opinion religions were so much alike that there was no difficulty in bridging the gap between them. To the ignorant laity, especially in the animistic north, which had lapsed into the unorthodox habit of prayer, Buddha was not so different from the Christian concept of an almighty father who responded to invocation.

Since the bonds of family affection are strong in Siam, the Christian prospect of immortality and reunion has a great attrac-



tion. Although the Christian concept of sin and its forgiveness seems incongruous and foreign to the Siamese, the belief in a father who will care for the repentant soul is more satisfying than the chilly comfort dispensed by Buddha to the dying man, who is told to reflect on his good deeds and, failing those, upon Buddha's virtues. The Christian attack on Siamese polygamy and concubinage was helped by the theoretical preference for monogamy, long expressed by many cultured Siamese, and by the much publicized attitude of Rama VI. From their side, more tolerance has been shown by missionaries of late years on minor issues, such as the observance of Sundays and abstinence from alcoholic drink, betel-nut chewing, etc.

### *The Role of the Church in the Modern State*

Both Mongkut and Chulalongkorn were believing Buddhists, and their assistance to the church was aimed at restoring its primitive purity rather than equipping it to cope with a changing world. Despite his preoccupation with the secular administration, Chulalongkorn's name has become closely associated with religion through the fine edition of the *Tripitaka* sponsored by him,<sup>18</sup> and through the building of a monastery in the noblest tradition of Siamese architecture as a memorial to his reign. It was left to Rama VI to give a new turn to traditional Buddhism.

In a sermon delivered to the Wild Tigers in 1914, the king declared that Siam was the last stronghold of Buddhism. After sounding this alarm, he called attention to the large number of lazy, not to say dishonest, priests who had taken the yellow robe simply to hide their real natures. Buddhism, he said, lacked vitality and intellectual vigor and was kept going solely through its ancient organization and the force of inertia. The Siamese were Buddhists from habit rather than from conviction. The result of their preoccupation with personal salvation was a selfish individualism, inimical to the community life essential to making a united nation. Whereas Chulalongkorn had urged an examination of conscience before adopting either Buddhism or Christianity, Rama VI used Buddhism as a force to weld national consciousness, though he also gave generously to mission works and repeatedly acknowledged their benefit to Siam. In an effort to halt the denationalizing

forces of the West, he raised Buddhism to a national issue. He substituted the Buddhist for the Gregorian Calendar, which his father had partially adopted; he introduced Buddhist prayers in government schools, police stations, army barracks, and even the insane asylum; and he included a profession of Buddhist faith in the oath taken by the Wild Tigers.

When Buddhism was pressed into the service of the State, it at once showed certain weaknesses as a nation-building force. The desire for material things, which is diametrically opposed to Buddhism, was being deliberately cultivated to make the Siamese exploit their natural resources. But as Buddha's precepts to kill desire had never taken very firm root in Siam, it was not so hard to change that as it was to adapt Buddhism to the endorsement of Siam's participation in the world war. It was true that Buddhism among the ancient Thais had never been a serious deterrent to their bellicose activities—priests even blessed departing armies; but it did mitigate war's brutality. The enlistment of Buddhism's active support on behalf of the forces of righteousness was now embodied in a birthday speech<sup>19</sup> delivered to the king by the Patriarch, which so pleased the Government of Burma that it ordered an edition for distribution in that equally Buddhist country. Buddha, it appears, never forbade his followers to fight a war of self-defense. A similar interpretation of Buddha has been sponsored by the constitutional Government; Buddhist priests now bless the new battleships.

In the field of education no such radical manipulation of Buddhist precepts was necessary since under Buddhism instruction and morality flourished most honorably. When Prajadhipok came to the throne, he announced his intention of using his title of Protector of the Buddhist Faith, conjointly with his royal titles, at all public functions; and this was heralded as of great importance throughout the Buddhist world. ~~His policy was not aggressive and chiefly continued that of his predecessor.~~ In practice he applied it almost exclusively to educational reforms.

When he decreed that Buddhism should be taught in the schools, he insisted that its principles alone should be emphasized and that it should not be extolled at the expense of other religions. On the same occasion he offered annual money prizes for the best book teaching Buddhist principles to children.<sup>20</sup> The energetic

Minister of the Interior at the same time asked the Prince Patriarch's cooperation in adapting ethical instruction to lessening the current trend towards crime, and the Patriarch gladly supplied teachers of religion for government schools.

Simultaneously the king, realizing the drain on time, money, and energy that the Buddhist ritual involved for the whole populace, took steps to see that it should have a less hampering effect on the work of the Government; formerly ceremonies took up a good half of the officials' time. Rama VI had already checked further temple and *prachedi* construction by simply finishing in his reign what had already been begun and by inaugurating a fund for the repair of the old buildings that were the most dilapidated. Prajadhipok exerted his influence towards developing the idea that the merit derived from the repair and embellishment of ruined temples was as great as that acquired by building new. Appreciating the fundamental scepticism of the cultured Siamese, who supported Buddhism for tradition's sake, he strove to emphasize the spiritual value of Buddhism. In the last days of the absolute monarchy there was an increased interest in religion in Siam; but it took the form of a general curiosity regarding abstractions and metaphysics, a disdain of the practical and material aspects, and a moderate revival of the mystical element.

### *Buddhism and the Constitutional Régime*

In Siam's constitution it is stated that the king shall profess the Buddhist faith and be the upholder of religion as an important factor in developing humanity. Yet the leaders of the Constitutional Government have shown marked indifference to Buddhism as such; they merely give it nominal support in return for its cooperation, notably in education, and because it is an adhesive force in the creation of national unity. The beautiful ceremonials formerly kept up through the generosity of the princes have fallen into disuse; the money that was formerly spent on them is now wanted for too many other purposes. Just how long the Government will think Buddhism worth supporting, even officially, is a matter of speculation.

The Government's ecclesiastical policy is not clearcut, as was shown by the length of the Assembly discussions *in camera* in

August 1938, when diametrically opposed opinions were put forward on so vexed and delicate a question as church administration. Even now the official position is not clear; but one trend in the past seven years has been fairly consistent—the increasing domination of the church by the State.

In April 1934 a committee quite independent of the Department of Church Properties was appointed to probe into the financial status of the monasteries. Officially its aim was to put an end to the confusion between certain church and private properties in cases where people had been allowed to build on *wat* grounds through the influence of individual abbots. This committee was also charged with appraising the real value of church property and with determining the exact extent to which repairs were necessary. In the following August some acrid sentiments were expressed in the Assembly debate over the proposed building of 122 new *wats*. There was general disapproval of the sentiments expressed by one member who complained that the monks were lazy and not beneficial to the people, and that it would be a waste of money to build more *wats* in which they might live comfortable and plutocratic lives. As a result of this stormy debate the Assembly secured what had heretofore been a royal right—that of authorizing future *wat* building.

In September 1936 the subject once more came up before the Assembly as the result of revelations that some *wats* were expending thousands of ticals on new buildings without asking the State's permission. It was pointed out that, if this were allowed to continue, many thousands of *rai* of land would slip away without becoming of any direct benefit to the people. This question of church property was certainly discussed during the secret debates in the summer of 1938. At this time, in reply to a request for more specific information on the subject, the Government replied that the Buddhist church disposed of Tcs. 2,502,776 in liquid assets, excluding its real estate. This sum was deposited in a bank and brought in Tcs. 100,000 in interest, which was administered by the Ministry of Finance exclusively for church interests. (The church's real property is valued at no more than half a million ticals.)

The same vociferous anti-clerical opinion was expressed in

1936, when a draft law to allow more lenience to monks in the matter of military conscription was defeated; but on this occasion the utilization of Buddhism in the suppression of crime met with the Assembly's general approval. Six months before, a bill had been defeated that would have permitted monks to become candidates for the Assembly.

In the field of education, there were a few voices raised in the Assembly against employing monks as teachers on the ground that they were incompetent to be the educators of Siamese youth; but this was the opinion of neither the Government nor the majority. The church had long assumed the sole burden of educating Siamese children; and when the State began to take over this responsibility, the monks showed no jealousy. When the constitutional régime inaugurated a more aggressive educational policy, the church authorities again cooperated. In May 1934 a normal school for priests was established at Donburi, for which 234 monks at once volunteered. In Sakol Nakhon a similar course is to be started. In July 1934, in addition to the 500 monks already in service, 800 more volunteered to teach gratuitously in either government or *wat* schools. Naturally the Government was delighted and has continued to use priests as teachers, especially in those regions where pupils have no opportunity to attend government schools. Until more funds and qualified teachers are available, the Government must continue to use priests as the main agency of mass education; but inevitably this policy is only a temporary makeshift. Education is going to be secularized, and the pace at which this will be effected depends solely on the funds and teachers available. Religion as such is getting no support from the State, which is contributing less and less to it. Festivals are dying out; and though the Buddhist Lent and Kathins continue to be observed, government schools for the first time in 1933 failed to honor Wan Phra, the Buddhist equivalent of Sunday.

The church's reaction to the policy of the Constitutional Government is hard to appraise. Buddhism has constantly set itself against participation in the country's politics; and Siamese monks are even less politically-minded than are their fellow-Buddhists, the Burmese. So far, government policy has not affected the church in any way that it feels to be vital, except in the case of the

cremation ceremony. Since the time of Chulalongkorn the State has been trying to curtail cremations, but they still represent an enormous drain on time and money. A man will frequently spend his savings of twenty years on the cremation of his wife, which requires a minimum of six ceremonies; and for persons of high rank it takes two years of weekly rites, which degenerate into a social gathering for the relatives. The monks have a vested interest in maintaining this practice, and there has been considerable *sub rosa* opposition to the Government's attempts to change it.

The astounding adaptability that the Siamese church has shown under changing governmental forms is at once the secret of its survival and an integral part of its creed. Just as there has never been a science-versus-religion struggle in Siam, so there has never been a church-versus-State issue. Traditionally, the king was defender of the faith, but he never interfered with its internal affairs and respectfully considered it an honor to be the church's first layman. Nor did the priesthood in any way covet temporal power. There was no resentment among the monks when Mongkut initiated reforms that the Buddhist church, then undergoing a crisis through its contact with the Protestant missions, required to revitalize it. The church has looked consistently to the royal family for leadership. The last two patriarchs have been royal princes, who saw eye to eye with their relatives on the throne. Neither the brilliant and capable organizer Prince Vajiranana nor his reserved and pious successor Prince Jinavara, who died in 1937, ever engaged in politics; and they consistently supported the Government. This was a particularly important factor after the *coup d'état* of 1932, when the patriarch's steadying influence counted heavily. His last work, "Was the Buddha a Vegetarian?," in which he decided in favor of a meat diet, showed to what lengths his support of the official program would go.

But if the highest dignitaries of the church went hand in glove with the new Government, it was partly because there were some signs of stirring from within the fold. Among the welter of petitions that greeted the new régime were some from monks asking for the transfer of certain provincial officials who had been approved by the church authorities. By September 1932 many monks had formed themselves into parties in order to do away with

the control of the lord abbots. This threw the abbots, whose attitude towards the revolution had not crystallized until then, onto the side of the Government, which in turn strengthened their position by protective legislation.<sup>21</sup> That this did not entirely liquidate the movement among the monks was apparent when the patriarch ordered thirty-three monks to retire in January 1933 because they had tried to force their abbot to hand over his powers to them. In February 1935 a delegation representing some two thousand monks from twelve provinces arrived in Bangkok to petition the Premier to bring government control of the Buddhist church into line with the democratic régime. They also asked for equality of treatment for both the reformed and unreformed sects, a request that was not granted by the Assembly till 1938.

The most interesting instance of monkish insubordination is the case of the famous Phra Sri Vijaya. In 1920, while he was at Lampoon, this monk was summoned before the Ecclesiastical Court in the capital to answer charges that he had taken advantage of his popularity to disobey the head priest of the *changvad*. The hold of the Buddhist church in the north has always been somewhat tenuous, and it was realized that this forty-year-old priest had an immense and devoted following in Lampoon and in Chiang-mai. Prince Bovaradej, then viceroy, let it be known that no criminal charge could be laid against him; and in Bangkok itself the highest church dignitaries became so convinced of his innocence that they defrayed the expenses of his return journey, bidding the monks of Lampoon to look after his personal comfort on his return. A crowd of ten thousand gave the hero-priest an enthusiastic welcome, all nationalities vying with each other to do him honor. He walked on a carpet made of the silk head-dresses of his Shan admirers, who carried him over the muddiest passages.

The year 1935 found him once again in Bangkok, and this time he was even more tactfully treated. He had been sent for because he apparently did not understand the rules of the Buddhist church. The charges against him were virtually the same, but this time the independent monks of the north had openly severed connections with their ecclesiastical superiors and declared Phra Sri Vijaya to be their leader. It was said that Phra Sri Vijaya had dispensed them from the need of additional learning, contrary to the church's

usual requirements. After they had refused to allow church officials to inspect their monasteries, some of these leaders were arrested.

After a sojourn of several months in the capital, Phra Sri Vijaya saw the light, signed an agreement to abide by the laws of the church, and returned to his home, to be welcomed back by more than eight thousand people.

Before he left, he had received the State's permission to undertake bridge building in his neighborhood, for which he soon raised Tcs. 80,000. But he was discouraged, in vain, from continuing the road and church construction that he had formerly undertaken. One of his roads, the Doi Suthep, built without benefit of engineering, has been almost completely washed out, and in his remodelling of the northern temples he has embellished the interiors with numerous self-portraits. His followers still leave their rice fields to help construct these ecclesiastical monstrosities. The widening of the nave, introduced by him, makes the whole structure unstable; and the errors in taste that have followed in his wake include the use of reinforced concrete and the dressing of *devatas* in Chinese clothes.

This rift illustrated by Phra Sri Vijaya's defection was not doctrinal, and the monks' participation was probably the product of the unsettled times. But the church was going to take no further chances, and in 1935 it persuaded the Government to legislate the strengthening of internal discipline by refusing monks permission to participate in politics.

In 1934 monks were forbidden to attend public entertainments under pain of being expelled from the Holy Brotherhood; they were also barred, at the request of the High Priests' Association, from competing for work with laymen. Not only were they forbidden to run for the Assembly, but they could no longer practice the art of healing—not solely because of their clerical character but because they fell into the category of second-class doctors. In September 1937, again upon the request of the high Buddhist authorities, the Minister of Public Instruction forbade monks to participate in politics even to the extent of verbally supporting any candidates in the election. In 1936, and again in 1938, two monks were involved in insurrection plots.



Reform of the Buddhist church antedated change in the form of government. In 1916-17 the Patriarch made a tour of the provinces to inspect and reorganize the *wat* communities. In Prachin he first introduced reforms in clerical administration and selected the most capable priests there as a committee to be responsible for their execution. The study of the holy scriptures by priests and novices has subsequently been extended to the provinces, and the number of scholars has been thereby increased. Another result of the patriarch's tour was the reorganization of religious revenues, by which a growth in church income was effected.

The annual reports published by the church since 1925 show a steady increase in the number of priests and novices; it has not been sensational but has kept pace with the population's growth. In 1930-31 there were 130,238 priests and 69,570 novices; in 1937-38 there were 150,213 priests and 75,079 novices. An attempt was made to do more than spiritually tread water. Since it was recognized that the lack of irrevocability in the Buddhist priesthood was keeping the scholarly standards low, the seminaries and Pali schools were increased and their functions were expanded to include propagation of the Buddhist faith among the laity.

In January 1932 the patriarch ordered the introduction of at least three courses in English into the curriculum of candidates in theology as an aid to research and as a medium for communication with the more advanced Western scholars. In 1934 a training school for Buddhist monks was opened at Korat, where three stages of study were required of priests, regardless of whether or not they intended to become scholars. The first two of these courses had been set up in 1930-31. The laity, too, were allowed to present themselves for these examinations to qualify as religious instructors in lay schools.<sup>22</sup> Prince Sakol is now trying to found a School of Buddhist Theology. In general, church reforms have not opposed the political changes but have simply run in another groove.

A parallel attempt has been made to educate the laity in religion. In September 1935, when the printing of the new edition of the *Tripitaka*, which had been begun by Chulalongkorn, was nearing completion, the royal family, which had donated the funds, voted to devote the balance of the money to printing the Buddhist scriptures in the Siamese language. For many years before this the

head of the textbook division of the Department of Education had utilized his leisure to publish commentaries on Buddhist texts. In 1934 Prajadhipok created a fund to further religious education, and even after his abdication he continued to evince his interest.

The only really positive action to which modern times have inspired the church has been the creation of the organization known as the Young Buddhists, which began about ten years ago at Korat. There was no special reason for its beginning there; it was a spontaneous movement on the part of some local priests who wanted a better education for themselves and to extend the field of religion, heretofore a clerical preserve, to the laity. This movement is akin to the Japanese Young Buddhists and to the American Y.M.C.A., but it is typically Siamese in being non-aggressive in its methods.

There are two minor lay movements, vaguely analogous to the Young Buddhist Association among priests. The Sala Sandana Tham is a society for the discussion of Buddhism, which hires two rooms and has an attendance of from fifteen to thirty men at its semi-weekly meetings. The Dharma Society, founded a few years ago by friends of Luang Pradit, has study classes. The religious side is emphasized by this group rather than the Y.M.C.A. aspect of the Young Buddhists. It is, however, also a social and recreational center. Unfortunately this society suffers from political complications since it was founded more or less to clear its president, Luang Pradit, from the charge of communism by some positive identification with the state religion.

Although Buddhism has tried to meet modern demands in so far as they are represented by the constitutional Government, it will have to go much further before it can play a dynamic role in the country's development. The self-centered world built by Buddhist doctrine has nothing in common with the active, social world of today, and it will have to eliminate the inherent contradictions in Buddhist concepts in regard to the elimination of desire and the cultivation of compassion.

Yet the very fact that Siamese Buddhism lacks intellectual vitality, as shown by its failure to take doctrinal root, means that it is malleable to an indefinite point. Without pressure from the outside world, the ecclesiastical authorities have already dropped

many of the rigid orthodox Buddhist precepts in favor of their natural sympathies and commonsense; and with the double stimulus of Christian missions and government policy, they are giving Buddhism a more social and forward-looking interpretation. If Siamese Buddhism has already been able to absorb such contra-Buddhist principles as the necessity for killing human beings and animals for the better survival of society, it can probably be indefinitely manipulated. Buddhism in Siam lacks inherent vigor because liberalism and tolerance are not their own advocates; and it lacks the dynamic appeal of aggressive religions like Islam and Christianity, which keep better social order than does a creed of kindliness.

At present the upper classes are sceptical and materialistic. The growth of official scepticism can be seen in the Assembly's willingness to tax church resources. The lower classes are religious in their observances, but mostly from habit and because Buddhism is inextricably tied up with their social system and daily life. Buddhism will probably survive in Siam, though in a profoundly modified form; and if it does, it will undoubtedly be due more to the century-old leavening force of Christianity in the country than to all the theories and policies of the so-called modern Government.

#### THE CATHOLIC MISSION

The history of the Catholic mission in Siam is rich in documents but poor in evangelical successes. The naturally indifferent temperament of the Siamese has been reinforced for centuries by Buddhism. Neither affirming nor denying any abstract truth, the Siamese place all religions on virtually the same basis. On the occasion of their first interview with Buddhist priests at Tenasserim in 1662, the newly arrived French missionaries heard their religion so courteously praised that it obviated then, as later, the possibility of conversion arising from argumentative discussion. In spite of the brilliance of the mission-induced embassies from Louis XIV and the absence of persecution by any of the kings of Siam, Catholicism made little headway; and notwithstanding repeated requests by Bishop Laneau, Phaulkon's treaty insuring religious freedom was never published.

The revolution of 1688 finally made it apparent even to Versailles that it was futile to count any longer upon the conversion of

the Siamese. From the outset Louis' hope that Phra Narai would be converted had been a delusion, and one that had been unscrupulously fostered by Phaulkon and the Jesuits, whose translations had distorted and modified the discourses of Siamese officials and envoys.

By 1664 there were two bishops and eight missionaries in Siam. The arrival of new recruits between 1668 and 1684 permitted an extension of the work modestly begun at Ayuthia. From 1671 to 1675 provincial stations, including churches and schools, were founded at Tenasserim, Puket, Lopburi, Bangkok, and Pistanuloke; and a sub-station was set up at Sukhothai. After the first years of study and adjustment, the two bishops formulated a program and general rules, which were embodied in *Momita ad Missionarios*, published at Rome in 1669. Pallu was the guiding spirit behind the mission reorganization, which was legally possible only after 1672, when the Pope's confirmation of the missionary mandate arrived in Siam.

The avowed aim of the *Société des Missions Etrangères* was the creation of a native clergy. For this a seminary was necessary, and Siam seemed to be the most suitable country for its location. To this seminary would come students for training from all the surrounding missions in Burma, Cochin-China, and Cambodia, whither they would return to radiate mission influence. The Ayuthian seminary offered, in addition to higher instruction for the clergy, a lower school of elementary education. By 1688 there were thirteen in the upper and forty-five in the lower school.

With the official disfavor into which the mission fell after 1688 and the decline of the austere rule inaugurated by Bishop Laneau, the number of pupils fell to thirty in 1716. In that year discipline was reintroduced, notably by one hour of manual labor a day. The Jesuits who came to Ayuthia with the French embassies were more learned than their colleagues already installed there; for Louis XIV, knowing of Phra Narai's interest in Western science, had selected twelve Jesuits known for their astronomical and mathematical prowess. They so impressed the king that he offered to build observatories for them at Louvo and Ayuthia.

The second project on the mission's agenda was a hospital, which was founded in 1669. The first year it had only three

patients, and by 1672, fifteen. Before sailing for Siam, the missionaries had received some training in medicine and surgery. To make their care of the sick more efficacious, lectures on medicine were given to the missionaries every morning, beginning in 1682, by a Swiss surgeon. Inasmuch as the majority of the few converts then made were the sick and the dying, the hospital easily became an integral part of mission activity; and the recurrent epidemics that plagued Siam enlarged its work. The king was much impressed by these missionaries as they were the only foreigners who had come to Siam without thought of trade and profit. He gave the bishop a gilded chair for his work but rejected the idea of endowing hospital beds "because such institutions have no place in Siamese customs." <sup>23</sup>

The last among the principal mission objectives was the establishment of a convent. On his return from a trip to Tonkin in 1670, Lambert de la Motte founded the *Amantes de la Croix*, with a nucleus of five Cochinchinese girls. His desire to bring nuns from Europe to guide them was opposed; but the money to run this convent was furnished, in the beginning, by some Parisian Carmelites.

From the outset of their work in Siam, the missionaries felt the need of training catechists. Although they made a special effort to use Siamese in this work, they could only find Annamite candidates. Almost two hundred years later Bishop Pallegoix commented that catechists were expensive luxuries but indispensable to a mission as they were the opening wedge in the evangelization of a suspicious people.<sup>24</sup> Catechists could enter homes that were closed to foreign priests; and if a flicker of interest were shown, the missionaries could then do the follow-up work.

Conversion was never on a spectacular scale; but the withdrawal of the French troops and the indignities suffered by the missionaries left in Siam as hostages in 1688 made the work of the mission more difficult than ever. Reproached with having aided the French troops, the missionaries were imprisoned, except for the best medical missionaries, who had become too useful in caring for certain Siamese officials. The bishop was forcibly divested of his ecclesiastical trappings and put into chains. Although these missionaries had not been responsible for the Jesuit-inspired alli-

ance with Phaulkon or the military occupation of Bangkok, they were nevertheless tireless in their efforts to negotiate the withdrawal of the French garrison.<sup>25</sup> The missionaries who stood security for Desfarges were imprisoned for eighteen months and suffered persecution until the full terms of the capitulation were carried out. Their churches were pillaged and their tombs were violated; and Siamese and Peguan Christians suffered violence and were subjected to hard labor.<sup>26</sup> The Annamite Christians seemed to stand the test of persecution best of all, but many of them died as the result of hardships and sickness. The missionaries were not set free all at once, but were released one at a time to enjoy only a restricted liberty. No new missionaries came out to Siam, and the king refused to let those already there go into the provinces.

The three unsuccessful attempts made by Père Tachard to reknit relations between France and Siam showed that the cause of Catholicism in Siam had lost its political support. Conversions fell off to nothing, and there were no funds with which to revive the hospital. Despite this poverty, however, a new mission station was founded at Chantabun before Laneau's death in 1696.

The moral and physical ruin into which the mission lapsed in the last decade of the seventeenth century was only slightly improved throughout the eighteenth century, which formed a drab contrast to the mission's brilliant success under Phra Narai. Intermittent persecution marked the period just prior to the Burmese invasions. Native Christians were imprisoned and fined on specious pretexts, and the bishop was received by the king neither well nor honorably. The climax to these humiliations came in 1731 when a stone was set up at the entrance to the mission inscribed with the king's edict forbidding his subjects to become Catholics.

A temporary reversal of royal disapproval occurred during the first Burmese siege of Ayuthia in 1760, when the king rewarded the native Christians who had aided in the defense with gifts of rice and cloth. In the disastrous siege of 1767 some of the missionaries and many of the native Christians were carried off captive to Burma. A few hundred of the native Christians who had fled into the forests rallied around those missionaries who had likewise escaped capture. They were joined by several hundred Annamite

Christians fleeing from persecution in their own country. The dearth of missionaries made it impossible for them to do more than hold their flock together in the three stations of Ayuthia, Bangkok, and Chantabun.

When Phya Tak succeeded in restoring Siamese sovereignty, he assumed a capricious attitude towards the native Christians. At first he sympathized with them and employed them in his palace both as bodyguards and as artisans. However, owing to the recalcitrance shown by the latter group about making the "superstitious objects" that he had ordered and their refusal to take an oath of loyalty by imbibing waters blessed by Buddhist priests, he decided in 1774 to forbid any Siamese or Peguan to embrace Christianity or Islam in even more stringent terms than the edict of 1731. Phya Tak was at this time coming increasingly under the influence of Buddhist monks. In order to ascend directly to heaven, he wanted to learn the art of flying, which the monks declared to be feasible; but the Christian clergy upon being consulted declared it impossible. For this and for their condemnation of polygamy, offered gratuitously at the same time, the bishop and missionaries received a hundred stripes and were banished from the kingdom.<sup>27</sup> However, the madness and death of the king intervened before this order could be carried out; and his successor was more favorably disposed towards the missionaries and even sent to Macao to ask some of those who had fled thither from Siam to return.

The reverses experienced for so long by the Catholic mission in Siam came to an end about 1811. From this time on more funds were sent from France by the newly founded *Oeuvres pour la Propagation de la Foi*; and there was a subsequent increase in the number of workers, to whom greater liberty was allowed by an enlightened monarch. In 1811 there were in Siam only one French priest, seven native helpers, and 3,000 Christians. After 1827, when Pope Leo XII gave to the Apostolic Vicar in Siam jurisdiction over Singapore, the Church grew rapidly, with a notable increase in the number of conversions among the Chinese and the Annamites. In the mid-nineteenth century the mission comprised one apostolic vicar, nine missionaries, and six native priests; and there were ten schools for both sexes and two convents having twelve nuns apiece. Throughout Bangkok and the provinces there were also seven

chapels, one seminary with twenty-four pupils, one hospital for Chinese, and a school for catechists.

Success apparently caused the mission to forget its caution. In 1846 the publication of a book by Bishop Pallegoix against Buddhism excited the hostility of Siamese officials, especially the Phraklang. Three years later the mission struck another official snag: an unfortunate incident humorously called *l'affaire des poules* provoked the banishment of eight missionaries. Most of them were permitted to return a few years later, but Nang Klao still regarded their work with suspicion. Communications were so poor that it was hard to keep in touch with the fifteen mission stations. This was the period when the Chinese began to pour into the kingdom, and the missionaries were successful in concentrating their efforts on those newly arrived. The Chinese who had long been in the country tended to become freethinkers and to let their children follow the religion of their Siamese mothers.

The accession of the tolerant king Mongkut, who discussed religion freely with both the Protestant and Catholic missionaries, marked a new era for Christianity in Siam. Mongkut, however, had political cause for fearing the French priests and their intrigues although Pallegoix was his personal friend. When that bishop died, the king had his body placed on a royal barge; and when it passed the palace, the king saluted it and sprinkled the coffin with lustral water—a signal honor. The treaty negotiated with France in 1856 left the Siamese free to choose their religion, but no edict of toleration was forthcoming. The mission was free to found new stations, but as ever there were not enough new priests sent out from France. In practice, though not by law, they had been free to preach and teach since the beginning of the nineteenth century, but there had been enough official opposition to make the missionaries confine their work chiefly to southern Siam, where it was less under the official eye, and to neglect the north. The Annamite mission at Chantabun was showing encouraging signs of vitality by itself expanding through sub-stations established nearby.

It was under the administration of the able Bishop Vey, a successor to the remarkable Pallegoix, that the Siam mission took on new life. The first part of his administration was passed under Chulalongkorn's minority, when the country was governed by a



regent hostile to Catholicism; and during this period Vey learned the Siam language so well that after Pallegoix he became the best foreign scholar in Siam, writing several doctrinal works in that language and revising Pallegoix' dictionary. When Chulalongkorn ushered in the era of official toleration, Vey was ready to expand his mission's work. In 1841 the southwestern stations had been detached to form a special apostolic vicariate of Occidental Siam, which in 1888 became the diocese of Malacca. In 1899 the eastern stations were likewise severed to form the separate mission of Laos, whose 22,316 Catholics now lived on both banks of the Mekong. In Bangkok the bishop opened orphanages, the Assumption College for boys, convent schools for girls, and forty-nine elementary schools for both sexes. In 1898 St. Louis' Hospital was founded, the first such institution for Europeans in Bangkok. To increase its nursing staff, which until then had consisted solely of the *Soeurs de St. Maur*, the *Soeurs de St. Paul de Chartres* came to nurse in the hospital. On Vey's accession in 1874 the mission counted 10,000 Christians; and at the time of his death in 1909 the number had increased to 23,000, although no Siamese without some admixture of foreign blood had been converted.

The mission and native Christians were definitely affected by the incidents of 1893, and fear of popular resentment did not die out until after Le Myre signed the treaty. High officials excused the mission from responsibility in the ultimatum and the bad feeling that grew out of the varied interpretations of the treaty; but in connection with the later question of the registration of protégés, Siam identified the mission with the French Government, as it had done in 1688. In fact, towards the end of the century, the mission came to be regarded by the Siamese as an agent of French imperialism. Popular indignation was shown, and Catholic mission stations were frequently pillaged.<sup>28</sup> It was felt that the mission had taken advantage of its altered status under the treaty of 1893 to further French ambitions in the Menam valley.

By the treaties of 1856 and 1893 mission lands had become French territory, and the priests in charge of them were placed beyond the control of Siamese law. The missionaries were thus able to protect all those who sought refuge in the mission under guise of conversion and so became the heads of a small but inde-

pendent foreign colony. These foreign groups, which heretofore had been rather contemptuously ignored by the Siamese, began to refrain with impunity from paying taxes and performing military service. Under cover of mission protection, illicit distilleries and gambling and opium dens were run, which alarmed the Government into taking vigorous measures against them in spite of mission protection. Naturally the mission gave much publicity to the violence of the Siamese Government towards its converts and mission property. The bishop appealed to the French Legation, and this aroused the French expansionists to cry out that the treaty had been violated.

Until the treaty of 1907 settled matters, the mission cooperated with the French consulate in encouraging any and everyone to apply for French protection, especially those Annamite and Cambodian families who had lived in Siam for generations. The treaty of 1907 changed this state of affairs; but the whole episode revived the seventeenth century fear on the part of the Siamese that French religious work was allied to political imperialism.

One of the most long-lived and delicate questions, which was virtually settled by the treaty of 1907, was the legal status of Catholic mission lands. Ever since the seventeenth century the status of the Catholic mission had been different from that of other foreign bodies in the country,<sup>29</sup> and this continued to be the case until the laws of 1909 and 1913 settled the status of certain deedless lands claimed by the mission. The Catholic mission has acquired the status of a Siamese juristic person and can purchase whatever lands it may wish.

More than three hundred years of experience in mission work has effected a shift in the emphasis originally placed on medical care to education. The missionaries have come to realize that the exertion of their influence throughout the school years has a more lasting effect on character formation than gratitude for relief from pain, which evaporates more swiftly. In spite of the growing number and excellence of government schools, there is still room for mission effort. Generally speaking, in any region that promises converts the mission tries to buy land on which to build a school and a church; and there are now about one hundred mission schools of different kinds.

Although the educational programs of both Catholic and Protestant missions are strikingly similar, there is a radical difference in their social policy. The Catholic priests come and remain celibates, but their work of conversion is through Asiatic family groups; the Protestant missionary comes usually with his family and works with individual Siamese converts. Though neither group can claim any mass movements towards Christianity, the Catholic method is certainly easier for the Siamese since it lessens the strain on converts during the transition period.

It is interesting to note that the rare edicts of persecution issued by Siamese kings have been directed against native converts and not against foreign missionaries. Although official persecution has long been dead in Siam, there is still a certain social ostracism of the convert that sometimes amounts to the same thing. In the days of Bishop Pallegoix, friends and relatives of the newly converted would gather around and attack him angrily,<sup>80</sup> declaring that he would lose all the merit he had painfully accumulated in earlier incarnations and go straight to hell. If he persisted, they would carry the attack to the law courts, alienate him from his wife and children, and accuse him before his patron, who might himself take up the cudgels and enslave him.

This was what caused the Catholic policy to evolve into segregation of the newly converted Christians into camps under Christian officials, who would not let their relatives torment them. St. Theresa's City in Bangkok is an interesting example of this method of tiding newly converted married couples over the period of adjustment by keeping them in a Christian atmosphere that will not too violently wrest them from their natural setting. This is reproduced on a small scale in the provincial mission stations. A Siamese cannot marry a Catholic girl from the compound unless he himself becomes a Christian; Protestants, on the other hand, do not interfere with the marriages of their converts.

In the provinces the mission has many more adherents, though a number of them come for the most trivial reasons and backslide easily. If they can be persuaded to stay long enough in the Catholic fold, their children may become interested; and that is the important factor, since second-generation Christians are far easier to handle than vacillating converts. The Siamese generally are puzzled and

also touched though not so much as one might think by the missionaries' life of devotion; and the church has found that good works and example are far more efficacious than arguments. The priest who replied coldly to Forbin when Buddhism was attacked, "Since we have the courtesy to approve of your religion, why can you not do the same for ours?"<sup>81</sup> probably still represents the average Siamese attitude.

Orphanages have long been a Catholic specialty and such work is particularly facilitated by the Siamese custom of lending out children for training. In the old days they sent them to the patron's household, and now they often ask the missionaries to assume this responsibility. The missionaries, who have a genius for turning up at deathbeds, see to it that they have a lien on the children of the dying. Such orphans as show ability and inclination rise in the Catholic church, which is principally interested in training a native clergy. The missionary emphasis on character-building has been increasing, and character-building is only possible when the Siamese is still in the formative stage.

Since 1910 the Catholic church has been growing at a little over 1.5 per cent a year, and Catholics now form about 0.25 per cent of the total population. Approximately 35,000 Catholics are the fruit of the labors of hundreds of missionaries working, with very brief periods of persecution, since 1555.

#### PROTESTANT MISSIONS

Although the first Protestant missionaries came to Siam thirty years before her Buddhist kings began to welcome Westerners, the same absence of caste feeling and racial intolerance that two hundred years before had attracted thither Catholic missionaries also drew this rival group. Their arrival did, however, generally coincide with a change in Siam's foreign policy, induced by the British conquest of Burma, which paved the way for Mongkut's frank acknowledgement that Siam must come to some *modus vivendi* with the West. The Protestant missions were able to serve Siam in the initial stages of her transition through magnificent educational and medical work, for which they exacted no political pay. In turn, the Siamese people taught the early aggressive missionaries that it was futile to abuse a highly moral religion like Buddhism,

and that the finest inducement to conversion was the example of Christian living. Although seventy years ago the missionaries could not make one good Siamese Christian and even nowadays conversions are rare, the extent of their influence cannot be estimated merely by the numbers of their converts.

### *History of Protestant Missions*

American Presbyterianism has now become so synonymous with Protestant missions in Siam that it is surprising to learn that the first two Protestant missionaries were a German and an Englishman, Carl Gutzlaff and Jacob Tomlin. They left Singapore together in 1828 and were befriended at Bangkok by the Portuguese consul, who did so much to aid the first European visitors to Siam in the nineteenth century. The attitude of the officials they interviewed was discouraging, though not actively hostile; and they were given permission to live in the capital and labor among the Chinese. The king became almost friendly when he learned that England would remain neutral during the Kedah war.

Although this engendered a friendly attitude towards the missionaries on the part of all classes of people, their lavish distribution of tracts and Bibles in Chinese soon caused the Government to become suspicious. This was partly due to the fact that local tradition predicted that a religion from the West would one day vanquish Buddhism. The authorities became alarmed, and the tracts were translated to see if they contained anything subversive. Thereafter only the Chinese were allowed to take the risk of receiving foreign medical treatment, and Siamese were forbidden to see the missionaries or to read their books. The Phraklang went so far as to ask Robert Hunter to take them out of the country, but he later permitted them to remain after they had threatened to complain to the English authorities.

After his first few months in Siam, Gutzlaff became so enthusiastic about the country as a mission field that he tried to interest different Western churches in its evangelization. As neither the Dutch society, with which he was associated, nor Tomlin's London connections were able to undertake a sustained effort, he sent an appeal to America in 1829. After three more years in Bangkok,

during which he translated some of the scriptures and wrote a Siamese dictionary, Gutzlaff became ill and discouraged. He found the Siamese fickle and regretted not to have found a single honest man among them; but at any rate he thought them morally superior to the more bigoted and sanguinary Malays.<sup>82</sup> Buddhism was so much a State religion and so interwoven with all the country's institutions that it was virtually invulnerable. Nevertheless, during his brief stay, Gutzlaff had sown the seed; he succeeded in converting a Chinese named Boon-Tee, who was destined to render great services to Siamese Christianity.

The American Baptist Mission was the first to answer Gutzlaff's appeal, and its missionaries came to work among the Chinese in Siam continuously from 1833 to 1893. Just as in the seventeenth century European traders first used Siam as a depot for the Chinese merchandise that they could no longer get in the country of its origin, so the first Protestant missionaries were willing to work temporarily among the Chinese in Siam as a step nearer to the Celestial Empire, which was then closed to their efforts. When towards the end of the century they found the Presbyterians handling the local work so well, the Baptists decided to leave the field to them and move on to China, where it was then possible to carry out their original objective. Although their mission was formally closed in 1893, it has survived in the Chinese Baptist Church in Bangkok. At about the same time as the Baptists, the Congregational Church had sent out missionaries, who remained in the country for fifteen years.

The Baptists and Congregationalists were followed by the Presbyterians, who dedicated themselves, as their predecessors had done, to medical work and the translation and distribution of tracts and Bibles. The ground had been well prepared for them by fellow Protestants, but they received their real start soon after arrival when the king sent for Dr. Bradley to cure some slaves who had been stricken with smallpox and cholera. It was carefully explained that the king was in no wise interested in their recovery, but that he simply wanted to test the new doctor's skill. Owing to the squalor in which they lived and the lack of any nursing, Bradley had no success; and in any case the king formed a poor opinion of

the ability of a doctor who insisted on examining his patients before diagnosing the disease and pronouncing his certainty of effecting a cure.

In spite of this failure, however, the mission clinic secured a heavy Chinese patronage. Dr. Bradley took the opportunity to preach to his male patients, while his wife nursed and prayed with the women. Prescriptions were written on a slip of paper upon whose reverse side a scriptural text had been printed so that patients acquired the notion that it was an integral part of the treatment.<sup>83</sup> The emphasis on treating the sick in the early days of mission work earned for the first missionaries and their successors the title of "doctor" all over Siam. When the Phraklang saw them at work, he repeated over and over again, "This is quite remarkable," and seemed at a loss to know why they had come so far for such an object.<sup>84</sup>

The increasing popularity of missionary treatments began to arouse a certain anxiety among the Siamese, which an unfortunate incident brought into the open. Dr. Bradley one day went out walking with Hunter and a Captain Weller, who strayed off by himself into some nearby temple grounds, where he shot several pigeons and some of the crows that infested the city. The Buddhist priests rushed out in great excitement, and in the ensuing fray Captain Weller was seriously hurt. Hunter threatened British reprisals; and although the affair was eventually settled, it harmed the missionaries in spite of the fact that they were not directly involved. About a month later they were asked to leave the country; and although they got a reprieve, they were confined strictly to Bangkok and could not even visit Ayuthia. About this time a friendship grew up between Dr. Bradley and the Phraklang's son, who became his pupil. The missionaries were given land in 1838, and this seemed to mark the turning of the tide in their favor.

In 1837, at a Buddhist celebration, a cannon exploded and wounded many who were standing nearby. That night Dr. Bradley successfully amputated an injured priest's arm—and this was the first surgical operation ever performed in Siam. The following year the first convert was baptized, and the first successful inoculation against smallpox was made by Dr. Bradley. For several years thereafter, however, he vainly tried to introduce inoculation gen-

erally throughout the country. Finally, in desperation, the missionaries inoculated their own children from smallpox patients; and, hearing of this, Nang Klao became sufficiently interested to send his own physicians to learn Bradley's art. The following year the king distributed premiums amounting to several thousand ticals to Dr. Bradley and his own doctors for their services in inoculation. A decade later the heroic work of mission doctors during a cholera epidemic again won royal and general approval.

Dr. Bradley made himself useful to the Government in still another field. He had brought with him to Bangkok a printing press on which to print tracts, the first of which were produced in 1836. In 1837 two new presses arrived, which heralded the increasingly important role of the printed word in mission work. It was on one of these new presses that the royal proclamation declaring opium to be contraband was printed in 1839—the first government document ever printed in Siam. Dr. Bradley was also able to give the country its first newspaper, in the files of which are to be found much valuable historical material.<sup>85</sup>

The 1840's saw the real work of the Presbyterian Mission begin. Among the newcomers was Jesse Caldwell, later teacher to Mongkut, to whom he imparted some of his convictions along with English syntax. As an inducement to this task, Caldwell was allowed to preach in the palace. Stephen Mattoon, another of the first group, became in 1856 the first American consul to Siam. Unfortunately for the mission, this identification with politics hurt its relations with the Government. The failure of Raja Brooke's mission at about the same time did nothing to improve the standing of foreigners generally. Nang Klao was becoming increasingly conservative and Buddhist in his fears of Western encroachments.

As early as 1833 Roberts reported that there was a certain group of Christians in Bangkok very inimical to the Protestant missionaries—much more so than were the Buddhist priests.<sup>86</sup> Neale had little respect for the Protestant missionaries; he disliked the strife and mutual recrimination between them, much preferring the quieter and more adaptable Catholic priests. Ship's captains who visited Siam also resented what they termed the high-handed mission ways. American consuls were among those who later resented the interference of the Presbyterians, whose early connection with



the consulate made them act as if they had a vested interest in it.<sup>87</sup> Not all the consuls felt this way, but there was certainly no united support given to Protestant missionary efforts by the Occidental community of Bangkok.

### *Mission Expansion*

Because of Mongkut's general liberality towards Westerners, it is generally and erroneously believed that mission troubles ended after his accession. Although overt hostility ceased and an era of expansion was opened for them as well as for diplomats and traders, the king was still too much of a capricious Oriental despot to be counted on as a reliable ally. Dr. Bradley told Bowring that he had had great hopes of Mongkut, but that he had disappointed them by placing restrictions on missionaries' travel and residence.<sup>88</sup> Since the Protestant missionaries had never been granted an official royal interview, they asked Bowring, whose negotiations they had greatly aided, to intervene with Mongkut on their behalf. To his solicitations the king replied that his proclamation had been designed to put a stop to their interference in politics, but that he meant restrictions on their travel to be only temporary. Later he gave them land, used them to interpret foreign documents, and permitted women missionaries to teach in his harem. Another slight and transient setback was given to mission work because a criticism of the king in a Singapore paper was inaccurately attributed to Baptist authorship. In this period mission schools began to flourish; missionaries began to tour the country; and a station was opened at Petchaburi. In 1854 a Mormon arrived in Bangkok but soon withdrew, discouraged that the Siamese needed no incitement to polygamy.

As in the case of the French in the seventeenth century, some of the Protestant missionaries mistook the king's intermittent generosity for imminent conversion. When the missionary ladies told Mongkut that they thought Siam should become a Christian nation because its king and its people would be much happier, the king replied that it would not be for a long time yet, adding, "I think that the Czar of Russia is not so happy as the king of Siam."<sup>89</sup> The English governess whom Mongkut hired was forbidden to teach her religion in the palace. Mongkut often said to the missionaries: "The

sciences I receive—astronomy, geology, and chemistry; the Christian religion I do not receive.”<sup>40</sup>

Nor were the missionaries much more successful with his subjects. The first Siamese convert was not baptized until 1859—thirty years after the first Protestant missionaries came. Bowring had little hope of missionary success.<sup>41</sup> He thought that their methods of wholesale Bible distribution were mistaken. One missionary told him that as many sheets of blank paper would be quite as eagerly sought after. The Chinese still formed the bulk of their very sparse converts, but new vitality was to be injected into their work when the mission expanded in the north.

### *The Lao Mission*

The story of the Chiangmai mission is the history of Dr. McGilvary's dream to evangelize the whole Thai race, especially the Lao peoples, whom he found more receptive than their southern kinsmen and far more numerous than was believed at the time. When he and Dr. Wilson made an exploratory tour of the north, taking two months for a journey that now requires twenty-six hours, they found a field so promising for missionary activity that they sought permission to open a station there. The king replied that he could not force a mission on the Lao people, but that he was willing to have it established if the Prince of Chiangmai would consent.

When the consent of the prince was obtained, the first church among the Laos of northern Siam was founded in 1868; and in that same year the first convert was baptized. Although Dr. McGilvary had to pay his first patients to take the “white medicine,” his medical knowledge was soon in great demand; and the missionaries' practise eventually included the prince's family. But the prince became jealous of the mission's success; and the first signs of trouble came in 1869 when a drought, resulting in a rice crop failure, was publicly attributed to the missionaries. The Siamese Government and the American consulate were requested to remove them from Chiangmai, though not officially since the prince was still apparently affable and had not yet decided to show his hand. He merely absented himself for a few months while a more active persecution was instigated. When one of the chief native converts was found clubbed to death, the missionaries realized that they must act at

once and dispatched an appeal to Bangkok. Because of the difficulties of communication, there was inevitably a long period without news; and even when the royal letter arrived, it was disappointingly mild. It merely gave the missionaries the option of staying in, or leaving, the country.<sup>42</sup>

Dr. McGilvary determined to resolve the issue by a bold stroke, which he hoped might put the mission permanently on a firm basis. He openly charged the prince with being morally responsible for the murder of the Lao Christian. The prince was so angered that he replied that he had indeed killed the man because he was a Christian, and that he would continue to pursue the same policy since he regarded conversion as tantamount to treason. The missionaries themselves could remain as doctors but not as evangelists.

Both the Siamese Government and the prince were a little nervous after this outburst. Since the British had conquered Burma, it was no longer so necessary to have at Chiengmai a strong buffer State; and Bangkok, in any case, wanted to extend its authority. A Siamese commissioner who subsequently visited the Lao capital reported that its Chao would be a difficult man to curb. The prince was therefore summoned to Bangkok and made to promise that he would trouble the mission no more. However, the whole problem was solved by his death on his way back to Chiengmai; and his successor was friendly to the mission. The missionaries could now build permanent dwellings and begin the pioneer explorations that carried them as far as Luang Prabang.<sup>43</sup>

A visitor to the Chiengmai mission sixteen years after it was established found that the missionaries there were applying what they had learned from their Bangkok experiences.<sup>44</sup> Straight proselytizing had yielded only about seventy-five converts, who were redeemed from serfdom and given jobs; but the influence of the mission teachers and doctors was already widely diffused. Dr. McGilvary had introduced quinine and vaccination among the people, who had been scourged by malaria and smallpox, and had set up five hospitals and a leper asylum. In spite of the Laos' indifference to education, he had initiated a series of schools as a means of evangelizing, which had grown into eight boarding schools and twenty-two elementary schools, a medical college, and a theological seminary.

In its relations with the Government, the mission convinced the Siamese authorities of the non-political character of its work. The Siamese commissioner encouraged the missionaries to appeal for an edict of toleration, which has since become the charter of the American missions. The minor and spasmodic persecutions to which the mission has been subjected have been associated with the traditional Lao accusations of witchcraft. In general the mission, to Lao thinking, is synonymous with everything that is altruistic. In 1885 mission work was extended to Lampang, in 1893 to Phrae, in 1894 to Nan, in 1897 to Chiengrai, in 1900 to Pistanuloke, and in 1917 to Yunnan and to the Lao people of Chiengrung.

#### *Government Cooperation with the Mission*

The establishment of mission centers in the north had no technical justification in the Siamo-American treaty of 1856. In the agreement made between Siam and Great Britain in 1883 British subjects were permitted to reside and do business in northern Siam in return for a minor concession of extraterritorial rights. The next year the American Minister asked the Siamese Government's permission for the missionaries to establish themselves at Lakon, south of Chiengmai; but records fail to show whether or not this was granted. Later the mission acquired property from the local Chaos, over whom the Bangkok Government now exercised suzerainty. Thus it appears that the missionaries, under a mistaken application of the most-favored-nation clause, assumed privileges that the British had acquired by special treaty; and on this basis the missions went on acquiring property until 1909, when this delicate problem came up for treaty adjustment.

While the Central Government consistently extended its control over all the northern provinces, missionaries were allowed to remain in undisturbed occupation of their property partly because Siam wanted to avoid trouble with a powerful nation like the United States and partly because of the excellent work that they were doing. In 1909 the titles to these lands were finally put on a firm basis, in which arrangement the Government showed itself very generous. Although the mission was not guaranteed against a defective title in relation to private owners—and this included the Buddhist church, whose property frequently overlapped mission lands

—and although the Government reserved to itself the right of eminent domain, mission ownership was assured as long as the land was used for mission purposes.

Like his father, Chulalongkorn seemed to accept Christian ideas and was very tolerant about permitting his subjects to follow their religious tastes. American missionaries were encouraged when the king stated that what Siam needed was Buddhism, but Protestant, not Catholic Buddhism. The mission on its side made itself *persona grata* by dissociating itself from politics, both national and international, and by spontaneously advocating Siamese rights. To differentiate its policy from that of the French Catholics in 1888, the mission adopted a rule not to lend money to the national Christians or to help them with their lawsuits. The ex-regent of Siam praised missions in these significant terms:

Siam has not been disciplined by English and French guns, like China; but the country has been opened by missionaries, to whom Siam owes the introduction of printing, European literature, vaccination, modern medicine and surgery, and many useful mechanical appliances.<sup>45</sup>

He might have added that it was a missionary who first produced Siamese type, first originated public education, wrote the first dictionary, opened the first asylums for the insane and for lepers, founded the first girls' school, and organized the first dispensaries.

Not even the identification of Buddhism with the growing nationalism that characterized Rama VI's reign interfered with the excellent relations between the mission and the Government. In his speech at the Protestant centenary celebrations in 1928, Prajadhipok took up the question of Buddhist tolerance of rival ecclesiastical activities. He declared that all Buddhists, and particularly the king, who officially defended the faith, rejoiced to see merit made under the influence of any religion since the goal was always the same—the diminution of the world's misery. The missionaries, he said, had shown themselves able to teach the Siamese to be better men and women and to be loyal to their country; and theirs was the only foreign enterprise whose benefits were enjoyed wholly in the country. When this same king decreed that moral instruction should be given in the country's schools, he added that Buddhism should not be extolled at the expense of other religions. There have

been almost no lapses in the history of Siamese tolerance, and this has been of great political significance as it has helped to hold together as one nation numerous Asiatic races and to keep them accessible to foreign intercourse.

The chief obstacle to mission work has therefore been not open hostility on the part of either the Government or the Buddhist priests but the "terrible indifference" of the Siamese people. The general Siamese reaction to missionary work has been particularly clear in the field of education. The Protestants have followed the Catholic example of evangelizing chiefly through their schools; and the Buddhists have been very quick to respond since the missions offered instruction infinitely superior to that of the *wat* schools, where priests taught in a totally incomprehensible Pali. Yet they would accept mission education without absorbing its religious connotation. Boys would only tolerate the Christian flavor of mission schools for the sake of their educational advantages; and girls would accept it while there but forget it when they returned to their families. Graduation exercises at mission schools became known as "Good-bye Jesus Day." Yet attendance has risen markedly from 2,355 pupils at all of the ten Protestant mission schools in 1916 to 3,729 just before the revolution. Education remains the principal means of influencing the future leaders of the country, even when it results in no formal conversion.

Coming from a country that was neither so poor nor so predominantly agricultural as Siam, the missionaries at first educated too intensively and without sufficiently correlating the curriculum with the social and economic status of their students. Just as they laid down the framework of an educational system that left the masses untouched, so they introduced the printing press without evolving an appropriate Christian literature. To this day the mission is conscious that this lacuna is one of the weakest links in its entire program.<sup>46</sup> Failing to appreciate fully that Buddhism has many of the philosophical tenets found in other great religions, they at first gave themselves over too much to doctrinal disputes, which hindered rather than helped conversion. It was inherently the mission's absorption in the religious conversion of the Siamese, to the exclusion of its relationship with fundamental social and psychological problems, that caused its early failures.

Christianity suffered doubly because it came to Siam in the wake of Western culture. Inevitably it was associated with the threat of European domination; and its bodily transplantation resulted in the denationalizing of converts by cutting them off from their traditions and customs.<sup>47</sup> The ethical standards introduced by the missionaries were so rigid and so Western that they made few if any converts during the first years, and even those who were baptized refused to remain Christians because the program of life evolved for them was not well rounded enough. Socially the convert was cut off from his family and community life, and he was without recreation as Christian holidays were duller than the colorful Buddhist ceremonies. Anyone refusing to give a priest his morning rice was marked out for petty persecution and ridicule in the village. The Catholic church, with its arrangement for wholly Christian communities, has done far more than the Protestants to help converts adjust themselves.

Articulate observers of early Christian converts in Siam were not impressed by their worth as a group. The old derogatory term of "rice-Christians" was certainly more applicable to Catholic than to Protestant converts; for the Protestant missionaries were careful not to interfere in the ordinary course of justice simply because members of their fold were involved. Yet to this day the need of supplying a livelihood for their poor Christians is a source of trouble to missionaries of both creeds. The mission naturally cannot refuse to assume responsibility for starving parishioners; yet once they are hired, it is impossible to discharge them for inefficiency without their resigning from the church, along with their families. If the missionaries employ Buddhists or Chinese, it is resented by the Christian Siamese, who, as often as not, send an anonymous letter of complaint and threats.

Hospitals have proved a less efficacious means of conversion than have schools. In the eleven years from 1916 to 1926, only 322 patients out of the 250,000 treated by mission doctors were reported as won over to Christianity. The more recent mission trend towards building hospitals contrasts with the earlier methods of touring the country and bedside healing generally. The tendency to institutionalize medicine has increased its complexity and cost, with the result that fewer patients are able to be treated and virtually

none can pay. The realization that technique had outrun the people's needs, just as educational programs had become too intensive, led to the launching of the junior doctor movement as a compromise solution—perhaps not abstractly desirable, but better fitted to the country's requirements. In the treatment of leprosy, the same situation can be seen on a minor scale; since hospitalization is too expensive a solution, numerous primitively equipped and inexpensive local clinics are being set up.

In the three branches of Protestant mission work—evangelical, educational, and medical—the tendency is now established to leave direct rural contacts to native workers and to confine the missionaries' efforts to various centers. This puts the missionaries in the advantageous position of being sought after and also increases the efficiency of the service they can offer. But it has the drawback of reducing the number of their contacts with the Siamese people. Experience, however, has demonstrated that evangelical work is best carried on through the agency of the school, and with slightly less success through the hospital and clinic.

### *The Church of Siam*

Apparently it never occurred to the early Protestant missionaries to build a national church in the country independent of headquarters at home. But experience has revealed the necessity of separating Westernization and Christianization in the Siamese mind by creating a Siamese Church under national leadership. This concept did not appear until about 1875, and not until the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 did sentiment swing officially towards the authorized formation of indigenous churches in the mission fields. Instead of favoring a division between the Christian and Buddhist communities, as they had done heretofore, the mission accepted the idea of permeating the Siamese with Christian ideals without insistence upon a formal conversion. The result has been that it is now impossible to distinguish in ordinary life a Christian from a Buddhist Siamese; and this has involved, of course, more mission tolerance towards the non-Christian aspects of the Siamese social order. When the process was carried one step further and patriotism was actively instilled through mission agencies, all Siamese opposition to mission work melted away. Subsequently, government coopera-



tion with the mission has resulted in an admirable dovetailing of educational and medical activity.

Nevertheless, the church has not grown numerically in proportion to the growth of the population; and it cannot be said to have become a national institution or a vital part of Siamese culture. Protestant Christians form 0.075 per cent of the total population, and this is the result of 110 years of labor, involving the whole or part of the lives of almost 500 missionaries. In the decade preceding the revolution, the cost of each new Christian gained averaged Tcs. 7,185; and it took a missionary an average of one year to make a convert, without counting the aid of native helpers.<sup>48</sup>

The noxious slogan "the world for Christ in one generation" is typically American in its belief in a speedy solution to a problem that involves the transformation of a whole social order. The problem of conversion cannot be an isolated undertaking; the church must be made an integral part of the economic and social structure. If the non-Christian could also be made to understand that the missionary is not working simply to make merit for himself, he might grasp the fundamental altruism of the Christian ideal; and the change from one religion to another, which is at present so drastic psychologically, would thus be greatly facilitated.

Another obstacle to mission work is the lack of sympathy and cooperation between the mission group and the rest of the Occidental community. While this situation is better in Siam than in many other Oriental countries, nevertheless there exists a general indifference or open dislike on the one side, and a banding together and a feeling of consecrated aloofness on the other. Only a superficial exchange of amenities marks the formal meetings of the two groups. Although its accomplishments may be frequently acknowledged as beneficial to the country, mission work does not enjoy high social standing or the prestige of whole-hearted Occidental support.

One very admirable feature of Protestant mission work is the reigning harmony between the different church groups in Siam. Although the Presbyterians clearly dominate, there are other Protestant efforts, such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which came to Bangkok in 1903. It has ministered chiefly to Eurasians, or those of Cinghalese descent, through a school

started in the capital in 1910, and has now expanded to include a mission chapel and two educational institutions for boys and girls. This mission has from the outset been so beset by financial troubles that its future has never been assured. Another English mission is that of the Churches of Christ Mission, an extension of the mission to the Mons in Burma, which has about 300 members and specializes in medical care.

In 1918 the Seventh Day Adventists came to Siam, and they now have stations in Bangkok, Lampang, Korat, Ban Pong, and Ubol. They have subsequently opened a free clinic in Bangkok and are going to extend their medical work to eastern Siam. Evangelization started among the Chinese and has grown steadily, thus following the tradition of all local missionary effort. This group specializes in the distribution of literature by colporteurs, who sell both medical and religious books, and especially a temperance magazine for schools. Puritanical standards have been rigidly maintained; no one is admitted to membership in their church who has not renounced smoking, betel-nut chewing, and drinking. The literary output of this mission proves that the Siamese are fond enough of reading to buy any religious literature provided it is attractively presented.

Eastern Siam, which had long been neglected, was also the scene of the Christian and Missionary Alliance's concentrated activity. There this organization found a vast tract of fifty-thousand square miles with a population of almost four million untouched by Western civilization. Like the Laos, these people were animists rather than Buddhists; and from the beginning direct evangelization has been the method very successfully used.

### *The Missions under the Constitutional Régime*

The change that has come over the mission's relations with the Government since the advent of the new régime has been definitely subtle. Outwardly, everything is as it was before; but the underlying attitude is no longer the same.

On both sides the sympathy shown towards the missions by the old régime has been a hampering memory. To the missionaries, particularly in the north, the courteous attitude of the ancient officialdom, which was willing to assume increasing responsibility

and push through any mission project it favored, stands in marked contrast to the ever-changing procession of apprentice-administrators of today. The latter treat the missionaries with no special consideration and have evolved a bureaucratic system of exasperating delays. They are fair, but not cordial, towards the mission. The new regulations are strictly enforced in mission schools and are sometimes impossible to comply with. The new immigration fee of Tcs. 200 is applied to missionaries and must be paid again when they return from their furloughs. All doctors must be registered, and no second-class physicians are allowed to practice. Discouraged by the purport of these changes, the missionaries have not made all the effort that they might to effect closer relations with the new régime but have remained rather aloof. Such little unity as exists in the whole educational field was forced on the mission by the Government. However, as their necessity to the country is still obvious, there is no immediate danger of their being evicted.

A more immediate agency of change was the depression, which Siam began to feel intensely in 1931. The enforced self-sufficiency of the mission in Siam has been psychologically beneficial on the whole. It was early recognized in mission schools that the exaction of even a minute fee was better for the Siamese than completely gratuitous tuition and hospitalization. For years the missionaries had tried to awaken in the Siamese Christians a desire for leadership and independence. During Rama VI's efforts to develop a spirit of patriotism, the Christians had seemed to respond a little and no longer to acquiesce with such docility to foreign leadership as before. At Chiangmai an experiment was started by Dr. McKean in establishing model Christian villages in which, for a very small rental, a family could work one of the eighteen plots of ground that surrounded the village church and school. After ten years' adherence to the simple Christian tenets that governed village life, the family were given a deed to their property. But even such inducements as this had not aroused the Siamese to assume leadership and group responsibilities; affectionate and loyal to the missionaries, they were quite unenterprising.

The celebration of the centenary of Protestant Missions in 1928 brought some change. What had been originally planned as a

simple occasion was, on princely initiative, transformed into a gala, at which the king's speech and generosity added immeasurably to mission prestige. For the first time Siamese Christians had a vision of themselves as a self-respecting and respected group, whose achievements commanded even royal attention and admiration. In 1930 the founding of the National Christian Council, which sponsored the Zimmerman Survey, gave the majority of Siamese Protestants who joined a form of united administration, which resulted in the coordination of eleven Protestant activities. The compulsion furnished by the depression, added to the self-confidence engendered by the revolution of 1932, committed the Siamese Christians in the following year to the establishment of the Church of Christ in Siam.

This move was in no sense a revolt against the mission. It came only after the Siamese Christians had been repeatedly assured that the missionaries approved—at least in theory. In April 1934 all but the Anglicans and the Seventh Day Adventists combined to unite all the Protestant Christians of Siam, and now the total membership of this church is 70,000. The psychological results have been among the most important. When the mission was forced to withdraw some of its support and the Siamese were forced for the first time to pay for medicine that they had formerly often thrown away, they began actively to appreciate mission benefits. Mission schools, whose first pupils had been hired to attend, now became self-supporting. Out of a total annual expenditure of Tcs. 251,000, only Tcs. 27,000 now comes from New York, the rest being raised locally.<sup>40</sup> This is remarkable in a land where the Government has thousands of tax-supported schools that charge no tuition and where family incomes are so low that the fathers of many Christian pupils earn only about five dollars a month.

Inevitably the nascent church has made mistakes, and it has been especially criticized for not having adequately broadened the base of its membership. One of its many discouragements is that it has not yet received government recognition and has been accepted only as a juristic personality, like the Rockefeller Foundation. The missionaries feel now that perhaps they should have handed over responsibility more gradually in view of the dearth of trained native leadership. The recent emphasis has therefore been

on the better training of Christian leaders—doctors, teachers, and preachers—and also on better vocational schooling for the vast majority who are unable to enter the State university. It is hoped to send the most promising students abroad; and in the capital, Bangkok Christian College is to be raised to the rank of a junior college.

One of the multiple dangers to mission work from Siam's increasing nationalism is that it may become aggressive in church as well as in civil affairs. Mission institutions have been pioneers, but now government schools and hospitals are catching up with them and will not tolerate them if it should become a question of pointless duplication and competition. Another danger comes from the mission personnel. The early missionary was a shock trooper, and it was no part of his work to teach the Siamese to become self-governing. Now a new type of missionary must be sent who will tactfully transfer responsibility to the Siamese leaders. The recent decline in the number of missionaries to be sent to Siam—a decrease of over 35% in the last twenty years—makes this a necessity as well as theoretically desirable. Inevitably those who have been long in the field find it hard to get out of the old ruts. The missions need youth, enthusiasm, new ideas, more cooperation, and less rugged individualism.

The Protestant missions in Siam have about 10,000 communicants out of a total Christian population of 49,426. The Presbyterian effort is diffused through 11 stations and 55 schools, whose daily attendance is well over 5,000 students. Ten mission hospitals treat an average of 5,000 patients a year. Unconsciously and unwillingly, the Presbyterian mission, which has for so long been in the vanguard of the two great civilizing forces of education and medicine, has let the torch of leadership be taken from it. In the present transitional stage, the interval in which the Church of Christ is taking over, the mission is treading water, apparently content to rest on its very honorable laurels.

Neither Catholic nor Protestant mission work should be judged by the number of their nominal converts but by their imponderable and far-reaching influence. The expenditure of energy, time and money are obviously far out of proportion to the tangible results.

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## XIX · SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

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In ancient Siam the absolutism of the king was such that his subjects were nothing but slaves and chattels.<sup>1</sup> No one was exempt from the cruel and petty tyranny practised to inculcate meekness and a respect for authority in an already docile people. This subservience of the entire people to the king was continued down the social scale in a highly complex hierarchy ranging from royal princes to unredeemable slaves. But it was a relationship whose fluidity never petrified into a caste system; there was no hereditary nobility, and even royalty merged with the people after the fifth generation. Slaves and monks were only temporarily differentiated from the mass of the people, to whom they could at any moment return.

### *Officialdom and the Feudality*

The Palatine Law of 1458 decreed five classes of princes, depending upon the mother's rank, and laid down their administrative duties. The sons of queens were obliged to live in the capital under the king's easy control, but the heir to the throne was often given the government of a province. The custom grew up of assigning princes of certain ranks to certain provinces, but this practise was discontinued in the early seventeenth century because these princes were becoming too powerful and chronically bellicose.

Two centuries earlier the Khmer refugees had introduced the custom of dividing the different *krams* into seven grades, the title of each grade being adopted by the official in charge of it. The *kram*-prince got a share of the personal services of the men in his *kram* and of the revenues collected by officials, whereas princes without *kram* rank got only small allowances. The monetary and administrative power that came with *kram* rank was not taken into

account in the determination of social precedence, which depended wholly upon family rank. Princes continued to enjoy popular reverence only in proportion to the amount of royal blood in their veins. The country's highest official was the Second King, who had access to the Treasury; and two of the six Ministries were held by princes.

Officials, both princes and nobles, received a certain number of marks of dignity called *saktina*, which formerly carried with them a grant of land and a specified number of clients. Because these nobles were essential to the king in the business of administration, he was forced to give them very real privileges. However, these privileges could be abruptly withdrawn and their recipient severely punished if the king either feared for his own popularity or was convinced of the official's negligence. As a result the individual counted for little, and his importance was based solely on the title of his office.

It was in the reign of Trailok that the transformation of the feudality into government officials took place; and with it occurred a change in the nature of kingship, to the detriment of the feudal nobility. By correlating rank with title, and by making privileges depend upon office and not upon heredity, the centralized monarchy sapped the strength of a group that might have become dangerous.

Officials partook of the king's patriarchal character in relation to their clients, and they likewise insisted upon receiving every honor connected with their rank. Legal penalties were enforced against those who failed to show the allotted deference; and every person was hierarchized, from Buddhist monks to palace concubines. Officials exacted all they could get in terms of service, taxes, and obedience from a people trained in abject humility towards their superiors.

In theory there was no reason why any freeman should not become an official since the latter received no special instruction and the country's only schools were in the *wats*, to which both poor and rich went alike. But inevitably the sons of officials had more opportunities and leisure to learn the art of government since functionaries were not required to render so many services to the

king as were commoners. Moreover, the son of an official was automatically trained for the father's office.

A more regular form of training for the civil service was offered in the corps of royal pages. In accordance with the Siamese custom of placing children in the home of a superior for training, officials sent their sons, if they were acceptable, to the palace. There they served the king as personal servants as a preliminary to receiving official appointments.

### *Freemen*

In the administrative reorganization that occurred in 1454, the whole populace was divided into civil and military groups, each with its specified ranks and duties. But more fundamental was the division into a number of departments called *lakh*, each under a noble-official, for public service. The *lakh* was divided into two groups, *svay* and *prai*. The former was exempt from personal service upon payment of a tax; and the members of the latter group, which was by far the larger, were called up in rotation to serve as soldiers and sailors.

This system was evolved during the Ayuthian period, though it had its roots in the military feudalism of Sukhothai. In those days only the freemen cultivated the soil—that is, when they could be spared from warfare. Each man was allowed only as much land as he and his family could cultivate, at the most twenty-five *rai*. In return for this land, the freemen had to hand over a portion of the land's produce as well as a part of his time to his lord; for each noble was responsible to the king for a certain number of men for public works or for military service. The freemen were protected by their lords, who assumed legal as well as financial responsibility for them.

When the monarchy became strong enough to transform the feudality into a civil service by turning a territorial into a personal bond, an analogous change took place in the relationship between the patron-official and his freeman-client. The result was a weakening of the feudality's power from both ends, although outwardly the nobles seemed to enjoy as much wealth and personal service as before. By permitting a freeman to choose his own patron, the



king abolished the latter's power over a cohesive geographical unit; and the bond between the king and the third estate was correspondingly strengthened. The freemen began to regard the land they cultivated as their own property.

About the middle of the Ayuthian period a further development took place when the Government accepted money payment in lieu of personal service. This gesture was duplicated by rich patrons, who preferred to pay the Government for permitting their clients to give all their time to the cultivation of their lands. The substitution of money payments for personal services was only immediately advantageous to the Government, which was weakened thereby; and the feudality became mere tax-collectors both for themselves and for an ever more centralized Government. Only the princes sent to govern distant provinces were able to maintain their independence, whereas those nobles who had formerly lived on their fiefs without holding office were summoned to the capital and given appointments that would keep them under the king's eye. In general it may be said that the system worked out to the transient advantage of the Government, to the partial amelioration of the freeman's position, and to the detriment of the feudality's real power.

With time the administrative and social situation became anarchical and confused. The theoretical specialization of office was steadily lapsing into a regional differentiation. Too much came to depend upon the personality of the official, and too little on his policy. Certain departments became over-staffed because clients came to choose as patrons those who made them work the least and whose protection was most effective. There was no real control exercised over personal or public services because the law's enforcement depended upon the very men whose interests it worked against.

At the age of eighteen all recruits were tattooed with the mark of their patron's department and instructed in their future work. In the king's service they fought under their patron in wartime and engaged in public works in time of peace. In their patron's service they became his laborers or his servants. Theoretically the lord had a limited claim on his client's time, but actually he got the major share. Some unfortunates remained in their patron's service

all their lives; others, who lived far enough away, were called for service only during wartime. There were innumerable extra-legal demands on the freeman, whose services and animals could be requisitioned at any time. Skilled craftsmen were drafted into perpetual service, for which they received a miserly wage, and were compelled to train their sons to endure a similar fate.

### *Slaves*

Slaves occupied the lowest place in the social scale, though they too were ranked in different categories. Slavery existed in Sukho-tai, but it did not become firmly embedded until the Ayuthian period, after which it permeated the whole social system until late into the nineteenth century. In 1854 Pallegoix estimated the number of slaves at about a fourth of the total population.

According to the Law of Manu, Siamese legislators recognized seven classes of slaves, based on the manner of their acquisition; but by the eighteenth century they had fallen into two major groups—redeemable and unredeemable slaves. The former were debt slaves who had sold themselves for a portion of their value, which was fixed by law, and who could at any time regain their freedom upon repayment of their debt. However, few were able to buy back their freedom since their services were regarded as interest on the original loan; moreover, many of them actually enjoyed their irresponsible and protected status as slaves. Unredeemable slaves were either war prisoners or those bought outright for their full value. Their masters had full power either to re-sell or to bequeath them, but not to kill them. Although their lot was harder because they were entirely dependent on their master's personality, the position of both redeemable and unredeemable slaves was in general fairly tolerable and improved distinctly in the second generation. The children of debt slaves were free, and those of unredeemable slaves could buy their freedom.

Private slaves, who might be of either variety, had considerable rights, which included the inheritance of property, marriage, and the right to bring suit through the medium of their masters—provided his official duties did not interfere. Public slaves, who were either war prisoners or criminals, were despised as a class; and their children were enslaved at birth. In general, however, their condi-

tion did not compare too unfavorably with that of private slaves, who owed service both to their masters and to the king, theoretically six months to each. Since, during their period of public service, the latter had to support themselves, it was decided at the end of the Ayuthian period that they could work for themselves one month in three, the other two months being divided between their two masters. The law in this matter tried to maintain the proportionate corvée strength of the different *krams*, but it was regularly circumvented as there was no way of preventing a patron from accepting a runaway slave. Moreover, poor freemen whom the Government had failed to protect often enslaved themselves to mild masters of a *kram* known for its light work. In 1805 Rama I gave war prisoners the right to buy their freedom.

### *Smaller Social Units*

Monks, like slaves, formed a fluid and transiently separate unit of the population without political significance. The court Brahmins were too small a group to be feared as rivals to royal influence; and, divided into *krams*, they officiated at royal ceremonies and were revered for their knowledge of the *dharma*. Primitive mountain tribes had and still have no place in the existing social system. The need for more manpower, both for military and for agricultural purposes, transformed many Siamese campaigns into slave raids. Whole villages of transplanted tribes, especially of Laos and Khmers, enjoyed remarkable freedom once the suffering involved by their uprooting was over. Since they were not forcibly assimilated, the degree of their Siamitization was never uniform; but they suffered from no stigma as foreigners, and many even rose to high positions in the government. Each national group had its own camp at Ayuthia, where it remained unmolested unless it became too turbulent, as in the case of the Japanese. Intermarriage, especially with the Chinese, was never frowned upon, nor were half-castes despised; but marriages outside the kingdom were forbidden by law lest the children should "report about Siam to their father's country." Foreign refugees and merchants alike were welcomed.

Chulalongkorn recognized that the social organization of his country was not appropriate to a modern nation. By progressive

degrees, over a period of thirty years, he abolished slavery. The compulsory service owed by freemen and debt slaves was placed on a salary basis, and the foundations of a civil service were laid. Naturally these reforms were bitterly resented by the nobles, who were loath to relinquish their privileges and power. But the royal will had been too long dominant to permit more than covert opposition, and the slow tempo at which these reforms were introduced allowed people to adjust themselves to the belief that the king's policy really had their welfare at heart.

The abolition of the prostration ceremonial had an enormous symbolic value. But although Chulalongkorn did away with the externals of servility, it will take many more years to change the attitude of mind that went with them. Even in Chulalongkorn's time the attitude of the old Siamese sovereigns still prevailed, namely, that any social intercourse between their subjects was suspect. Europeans saw little of the retired lives led by Siamese aristocrats in their enclosed palaces. Great lords lived apart from each other, and those who were not officials emerged only for an important ceremony. The European influence that was spasmodically felt at Court for many years never penetrated private life. Officials were accessible only when their official duties required them to be. They fled contacts with their own people as well as with Europeans, leading soft and calm lives in the company of the ladies obligingly provided for them from an early age by their parents.

### *The Status of Siamese Women*

Polygamy tends to develop in a war-ridden country like ancient Siam; but the poverty of the Siamese and the perennial numerical equality of the sexes have been strong deterrents. To this day there are slightly more men than women in Siam. Probably polygamy never affected more than 1 per cent of the population, and this accounts for the profound difference between an aristocratic lady and a farmer's wife. Nevertheless, the levelling force of Buddhism has tended to reduce all women to spiritual nonentities; and from birth they are branded as inferiors because they can make merit only through their sons. Lewd conduct in a man costs one hundred demerits, in a woman fifty thousand. Buddhists maintain that the

sins of a woman outweigh the sins of three thousand of the worst men that ever lived. Women do not as a rule protest against the inferior position to which Buddhism has relegated them. Buddha did not set his seal on polygamy, but he did not expressly forbid it.

In regard to women's legal inferiority, the laws of Siam never followed the extremes of India or China in giving them unworthy positions or a feeble status requiring special protection. Nevertheless, Siamese women have never had to pay a poll tax.<sup>2</sup> In theory women can exercise whatever profession they choose, but until the last few years the liberal professions have been in practice closed to them. The basis of a woman's position is more customary than legal and is more spontaneous than is generally recognized by foreigners. No conscious effort is made to keep women down. Nor have Siamese women, from the time of La Loubère, displayed any wish for priority; to this day they voluntarily cede the conversational as well as the professional lead to their husbands. Legally women are not allowed to have more than one husband, and fidelity is obligatory only upon the wife.

The status of the Siamese woman is on the whole far better than in many other Asiatic countries. The law has shown a marked preference for the independent status of the married woman, along with its concept of an absolute legal equality for both sexes outside of marriage. Rape is severely punished. Although the dignity and the right of the first wife and even of the concubines have always been legally safeguarded, marriage until recent years has been regarded exclusively as a civil and private contract, with a consequent lack of precision in regard to property rights. Marriage is universal for both sexes, for a man at about twenty and for girls usually at eighteen. Marriages are usually arranged by a professional intermediary and from the viewpoint of family interests; but the couple may know each other before wedding, and their preferences as well as their horoscopes are consulted. The Siamese youth is usually content to indicate his choice and then lapse into inaction, letting his parents do the rest. Elopements are frequent among the humbler people and are easily forgiven by the amiable Siamese.

The fiancé pays his parents-in-law two gifts, one of which is to defray the past expenses of his betrothed. The bride's dowry insures

her against the caprice or desertion of her husband. Although the man is undeniably head of the family, the first wife is head of the household. Her husband is responsible for her debts; and if he does her injury, he must pay a fine. Adultery is not a criminal offense, but a husband may use it as grounds for divorce or for the confiscation of his wife's property. For both sexes divorce is comparatively easy, though slightly harder for a woman. Separations are frequent; for with a dowry and with a native ability to feather her nest, a Siamese woman can look forward to security alone. Upon divorce the wife receives back her dowry, one-third of the money made since her marriage, and custody of half of the children. Even married women have full control over their property and may incur contracts. Divorce cases under these circumstances are so rare that, when they do occur, the law courts are crowded. The matter is usually settled by the couple themselves. The husband, unless something outstanding occurs, prefers simply taking on a concubine to a divorce; he can sell the woman he buys but not the wife who brings him a dowry.

Often in reasonably happy marriages it is the first wife who brings in a concubine, preferring to make the selection herself rather than to leave it to her husband, in the hope that the new-comer will remain subservient to the person who brought her in. Then, fearing that this concubine may have won her husband's confidence, or have proved unsatisfactory, she brings in a rival. This process continues until there is a group of five or six—if the husband can afford them. The children are all legitimate but follow the maternal rank, with the result that they and their mothers are forever quarreling over marks of favor and precedence.

The voluntary semi-seclusion in which upper-class Siamese women have always lived was in marked contrast with the freedom of the peasantry and with the purdah of the royal harem. This unique institution was not solely a monument to the sensuality of Siam's kings. In a rural country with poor communications like ancient Siam each district tended to become autonomous. To keep himself regularly informed and to insure the loyalty of distant and powerful princes, the king took their daughters as wives; and the local princes did likewise with their subordinates. Buddhist traditions did not frown upon the king's marrying his own sisters so as

to keep the stock pure or to keep them from marrying a potential enemy; for at Court there was virtually no one of sufficiently high rank for them to marry. Princes, nobles, and designing relatives were delighted to offer their daughters to the king; and every year a new assortment up to the age of thirty was admitted. Those who proved to be childless were demoted to the status of waiting-maids. Usually ladies of high rank lived apart. Many of them were rich in their own right and were not dependent upon the king's bounty.

The chief nobles of the kingdom were not outdistanced by the royal example. In Mongkut's time some of them had from thirty to fifty wives. On the rare occasions when these gentlemen entertained, their wives were secluded; and professional women dancers were the hostesses. What liberty Siamese ladies had they were shy about using; they never appeared at public functions, and their lives of leisure revolved about intrigue, gossip, and gambling. Not only did they have plenty of slaves, but the Siamese custom of placing clients' daughters as retainers for training by the patron's wife gave them even more unutilized leisure. Their education was of the most indifferent, and it is not surprising that gambling among upper-class women grew to alarming proportions.<sup>8</sup>

Peasant women have long enjoyed a status equal if not superior to that of their husbands. Monogamy is the rule, and the sphere of action of both sexes is much the same. Women are certainly the workers of the country, and no sowing or reaping can apparently be done without them. They have always enjoyed complete social liberty—an amazing phenomenon in the Orient. As their husbands were periodically absent, either for registration in the *krāms*, or fighting, or sojourning in the monastery, women came to control the family funds and to develop their commercial talents. Under very much the same conditions as Frenchwomen, they became saving and thrifty, with the result that the Siamese family still invests very conservatively and little money is put into circulation. Intellectually and socially passive before their husbands, Siamese women have always enjoyed economic freedom.

The conscious emancipation of Siamese women began in the reign of Rama VI. Himself a bachelor until middle age, he cam-

paigned against polygamy and in favor of modern education and clothes for upper-class girls.<sup>4</sup> When he announced his engagement, he requested the women of Siam to discard the *panung* in favor of the much prettier Lao garment known by the promising name of *sin*. Very soon this innovation became general among the young girls. Long hair and white teeth, which had formerly proclaimed an easy virtue, were adopted,<sup>5</sup> as were subsequently permanent waves, rouge, and manicure, to the amazed horror of the far freer peasant women. The passive resistance of the older aristocrats pigeon-holed some of the royal reforms, particularly the proposed revision of the marriage law. But time and education have worn down most opposition, though it has not yet entirely died out.

The application of the law enforcing universal primary education has had an enormous effect in the last twenty years on the intellectual emancipation of Siamese women. Coeducation has become the rule in primary and higher institutions, but is not favored for secondary schools. This new education has given women opportunities of which they have not taken full advantage. There are, for example, more situations as secretaries and telephone operators than there are qualified candidates. Individual girls have done brilliantly, however. The principal professions women choose are teaching, nursing, and medicine; and there are now so many of them in the arts course at Chulalongkorn University that in the future all teaching will probably be done by women. Although the constitution of 1932 granted women's suffrage, the recognition of equality between the sexes came during the last decade of the absolute monarchy. Many girls of royal rank have become teachers and even opened schools, activities which until the last generation would have been considered beneath their dignity. The discipline and manual labor in the mission schools are largely responsible for this changed atmosphere.

Professionally women are indubitably forging ahead. There was a woman candidate for the Assembly in 1936, and in 1937 there were two. At the first meeting of the newly elected Bangkok Municipal Council in April 1937, there were two women out of two hundred and seven members. A few months later a motion to debar women as civil servants, but not as teachers or nurses, was



defeated in the Assembly by a large majority.<sup>9</sup> By November 1938 so many applications had been filed by women for such positions as judge or *amphur* official—some but not all from those who had qualified in competitive examinations with men—that the State Council had to make special regulations regarding female functionaries; the different Ministries were asked to determine what kind of work was to be given to women applicants. This liberal attitude is doubtless attributable to the absence of male competition that still prevails.

The legal status of Siamese women has altered since the revolution, with not wholly fortunate results. Given more responsibility than before, they are also more exposed to danger. The will, introduced from Occidental law, has made it for the first time possible to disinherit a first wife. It came into force with the promulgation of the civil and commercial code in 1926 and unintentionally puts the married woman, formerly on an equal footing with her husband, on a lower status as property owner than before. Even if her husband disappears or goes insane, she can only bind her share of their common property and can only dispose of their joint property with her husband's consent, whereas her husband can bind both their properties on his sole responsibility.

The post-revolutionary change in the marriage law has also been unfortunate. Under the law of 1934, which was not made applicable to the Muslims of the peninsula, a marriage has to be registered to be legal; only death or divorce can make possible the registration of a second marriage; the bride must be over fifteen and the groom over seventeen; and they must not be blood relations. The children of concubines are still legally protected; but the law marks a step backwards in that it deprives the concubines themselves of their former legal status.

There are nine grounds on which a divorce may be granted under the new law, and the wish of only one party is no longer sufficient to dissolve matrimonial ties. There are no fees, scandal, or publicity attendant upon divorce registration. Yet the sexes are not yet equal as the adultery of a wife entitles her husband to a divorce but not *vice versa*. Moreover, once a divorce is registered, the husband is free to re-marry immediately, whereas the wife must wait 310 days.

*Family Life*

In ancient Siam there were two forms of marriage: *avaha*, when a man settled down in his wife's home where his parents-in-law could exercise strict supervision; and *vivaha*, adopted by those of rank and title, where the bride went to live in her husband's house. In the former case, all lived scattered about in tiny separate houses, each with its own kitchen. As eating is irregular anyway in Siam, there was less friction than might ordinarily ensue under such congested circumstances.

In Siam the family unit is much larger than in the West, and the wealthier classes reproduce on a bigger scale than do the poor and middle classes. The Siamese are very prolific, and birth control is not practised by any stratum of the population. The Government, though anxious to increase its population, nevertheless did not oppose the propaganda of a co-worker of Margaret Sanger since it was realized that underpopulation in Siam is caused solely by the unchecked death rate.

Most Siamese houses are open structures into which every eye may gaze without hindrance, but the majority of families spend their time out of doors. The wealthier classes have far more privacy. Life in the country is toilsome and monotonous; but the provision of food, clothing, and heat involves practically no effort. Festivals—family, religious, and national—are the chief business of Siamese life.

Siam is a paradise for young children. They are loved and idolized but left to look after themselves. They are taught, however, to obey their parents strictly, not by punishment but by example; there is rarely any need to strike the docile Siamese child. In ancient Siam parents had the right to strike, imprison, and sell their children. Yet they had a far higher spiritual standard of family living than did many Oriental countries. Poor families still sell their children, especially their daughters; but there is nothing like the exposure and sale of children that exists in China or the Indian practise of making little girls temple prostitutes. Child marriage and other cruel and inhuman practises have never flourished in Siam.

All newborn children are graphically known as "the red one." 7

When a baby is about a month old, its head is shaved with great ceremony and its horoscope drawn up, according to which its name is selected. All foreigners are struck by the brightness and physical precocity of the Siamese child. They smoke at the age of four, paddle their canoes to the market at five, and swim like fishes.<sup>8</sup> No children in the world are happier; they are masters of the house.

From the disciplinary viewpoint the boys are wholly neglected. Until the age of fourteen they can hold their own with European children, but after that development seems to cease. Possibly this is due to the tropical climate, but more likely it is because their parents never answer the innumerable "whys" that all children ask. This is largely attributable to their own ignorance but more to their attitude towards their children, whom they worship as pets when little, but whom they regard with indifference when they begin to assert their personalities.

Just as the son in the family easily escapes parental domination, so authority comes down doubly hard on the daughters of the house. Parents like to choose professions as well as husbands for their girls, who usually submit to the choice made. On the rare occasions when opposition occurs, it becomes too much trouble to enforce the parental will if an open break threatens.

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## XX · SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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The marked contrast between rural and urban Siam antedates contact with Western life; but this contact has caused Bangkok to evolve more rapidly than the rest of the custom-ridden country. The Siamese has always been congenitally rustic; and when he went to the capital, it was only for royal service or in connection with duties in his patron's household. There he was kept in semi-idleness, a fed retainer with menial duties, content to watch the industries created by and for the Chinese without ever dreaming of competing with those alien coolies. The gradually changing customs, which sapped the patronage system, threw thousands of these transplanted retainer-peasants out of the work that had brought them and their forefathers to Bangkok. Never given to overwork, they have adjusted themselves to the new employment conditions better than might have been expected; and it is surprising that more of them have not taken to crime and gambling.

### *Traffic in Women and Children*

Bangkok is a city of clubs for all nationalities; there are technical, social, business, and sports clubs. Those of the Siamese and Chinese are devoted more to games of chance than to sports. Until the Government inaugurated repressive measures, gaming, drinking, and prostitution were very much in evidence; liquor and opium are still sold, and brothels still operate, in each case under government license. During the ten years before the depression liquor imports rose 41 per cent. The red light district—green in Bangkok—is very extensive; many religious leaders have called the Siamese capital a spiritual morgue.

In 1900 the columns of the *Siam Free Press* were filled with complaints about the widespread prostitution in Bangkok and the lack of police or medical control.<sup>1</sup> At that time the Government was unable to decide whether to place brothels under medical

inspection or to farm them out like opium and liquor. Editorials denounced the latter course as debasing and dishonorable, "an irrevocable sign of the incorrigibility of the Siamese." Yet Siamese villages have been notably free of venereal disease, of which there is practically none outside the market centers.<sup>2</sup> In the latter and in the larger cities, especially the port towns, commercialized prostitution flourishes. The infection of urban centers, as contrasted with the freedom of rural areas from this disease, is the more marked in view of the complete ignorance of elementary hygiene in the case of both groups. The first clinic for venereal diseases was opened in Bangkok in 1937.

In the *Daily Mail* was aired the scandal of the police complicity, of at least a decade's standing, with a slave syndicate run by influential Siamese. Agents in China kidnapped girls for brothel service in Siam and Malaya, and hundreds of them were sold annually through an exchange pleasantly known as "the rest house." The suicide of a Chinese girl, who had been decoyed to Bangkok thinking that she was joining her husband in Saigon, led to a press investigation, which only at first received royal support. But finally, in May 1928, the traffic in women and children was made unlawful, with a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment and a fine of Tcs. 1,000.

For about ten years after this the question found little place in the Siamese press, partly because of the improvement effected in police administration. When Prince Sakol represented Siam at the Bandoeng Conference of 1937, the problem of local prostitution again received publicity. The prince returned with a program of four R's: the rescue, refuge, rehabilitation, and re-education of the Bangkok prostitute. Attention was called to the growing number of deserted babies in Bangkok, the increase in venereal disease, and the need for a home for unmarried mothers. Lao girls were found in Bangkok brothels, and the Siamese consul at Singapore reported the presence of two hundred and fifty Siamese prostitutes in British Malaya.<sup>8</sup> Much more important was the publicity given to the sale of children. Public and police attention became focussed on an age-old problem, which had in recent years assumed alarming proportions.

The Siamese love of children is obvious to any observer. Mal-

treatment of children, aside from their suffering as a result of hygienic and dietary ignorance, exists only in the cities, and then principally among the immigrant Chinese, who sometimes work their children very hard.<sup>4</sup> In 1937 the *Bangkok Times*, in an article commending the Government's efforts to improve the physique of young people, urged that something be done about child labor. That it existed in the form of drawing water and hewing wood in Bangkok was obvious, but to what extent sweated industries and forced labor in shops and behind closed doors existed was unknown. Presumably information will be forthcoming in the Government's labor survey, now in preparation. It is, however, in the regulated sale of children that hardship is most widespread.

The recent investigations of the Criminal Investigation Department, which were the result of a vigorous press campaign, revealed conclusively a systematic trade in children. Poor parents were sometimes forced to sell their children through agents, who glibly promised them the tenderest and noblest of foster-parents. The selling of daughters as concubines and the placing of children as retainers in a patron's home were well established Siamese traditions; but it was the Penal Code of 1908, and later the depression, that put the custom on a commercial basis. The law of 1908 set aside the old Siamese law, which gave parents much greater authority over their children; and twelve was made the age of consent. The age was later raised, but the limitation of parental authority was not only an innovation in Siam but unprecedented in civilized countries.

Under the new law kidnapping children from the ages of ten to fourteen became illegal only for ransom or for immoral purposes, which were hard to prove. Girls sold ostensibly for domestic service were put into brothels; and though the Government was officially against this, public opinion was still lethargic. Rama VI had scored "parental irresponsibility as being responsible for the present rather unsatisfactory state of morality prevalent in Bangkok and other towns,"<sup>5</sup> and public opinion still condones by acquiescence the looseness of morality. Prince Sakol is trying by vigorous propaganda to awaken Bangkok people and especially to interest Siamese ladies in the organization of a service for unwanted children and unmarried mothers. In September 1938 the Govern-

ment ordered all the *changvads* to compile statistics regarding the local traffic in women and children to be forwarded to the League of Nations.

### *Juvenile Delinquency and Child Welfare*

The depression accelerated the draining of rural districts towards the capital, with the inevitable result of an increase in juvenile delinquency there. Even before this the old Siamese family life had been dissolving for a quarter of a century; and more and more children are now leaving home and coming to the cities. Urban housing has always left much to be desired; and with overcrowding, conditions in the capital have become conspicuously bad. When whole families drift to the cities, the parents take to crime if they remain for long unemployed; and if they get work, the children are left too much alone since Bangkok has not enough schools to care for the overflow. This is also true on a smaller scale of the provincial towns, where there is no security apart from government service since there is not enough local purchasing power for any profession to flourish.

Anyone parking his car of an evening before a Bangkok entertainment hall has to fight off a crowd of hoodlums who battle for the privilege of "guarding" it and who exercise effective revenge if they are not tipped. The Government has made little effort to deal directly with these juvenile groups. There are vagrancy laws, but they are so ineffective that diseased beggars roam the city streets and country roads. The government reformatory at Kohsi-chang has been far from adequate in tackling the problem of youthful criminals. A new reform school is projected for the near future, and there has been a general quickening of interest in the whole problem.

Until the last two years the Government took practically no direct interest in child welfare. The boy scout and *yuvajon* movements were fostered as a training for good citizenship—and incidentally acquired a fatal military tinge; and there was a considerable amount of propaganda for the improvement of the national physique by means of a more balanced diet and the encouragement of sport. But for years only the Catholic mission cared for the

homeless waifs, until the semi-official Red Cross took a hand in the task.

The Government is now considering opening free vocational schools for homeless pauper children, and the responsibility for hygiene and child welfare is being transferred to municipal shoulders. Municipal councils are now obliged to provide amenities for their communities in the form of better roads, a water supply, and medical facilities, and above all to attempt to keep down the high infant mortality rate. The charity work begun and financed by Lady Yomarej was handed over to the Bangkok Municipality in June 1938 to become the nucleus of its child welfare organization.

#### *The Young Men's Christian Association*

In the late nineteenth century some Siamese students in American schools requested the Y.M.C.A. to establish work in their country, but some obstacle always arose. In the meantime a young Siamese Christian, B. T. Boon Itt, a graduate of Williams College and Auburn Theological Seminary, who had been one of the original hundred students to launch the Student Volunteer Movement in 1885 and who had favored the idea of founding a Bangkok Y.M.C.A., died suddenly of cholera. As a memorial to him the Boon Itt Institute was erected in 1902, the Presbyterian Mission allocating personnel; and for some years it functioned usefully.

The present Y.M.C.A., however, originated as the result of a survey made in 1928 by C. W. Harvey, then senior secretary of the Y.M.C.A. staff in China. The international committee raised a budget to pay for a secretary to be sent to Bangkok, then the largest city in the world without a Y.M.C.A. On his arrival in 1931, the new secretary, Walter Zimmerman, called together a group of Christian laymen, Chinese as well as Siamese, who eventually formed a board of directors, which received formal government recognition in 1932. The Boon Itt Institute was taken over, and the usual Y.M.C.A. program was outlined. The Y.M.C.A. has become the only movement, apart from the semi-official ones inspired by the Government, that concerns itself with youth. It aims to fill constructively the ill-spent leisure of Bangkok's youth and to be a school in character-formation and citizenship.



By 1937 Y.M.C.A. membership numbered more than four hundred men and boys of sixteen nationalities and varying religions.<sup>6</sup> An additional thousand have benefited by the group activities sponsored by the organization, and over twenty thousand participated in its program activities in 1936-7. The Y.M.C.A. is predominantly a lay movement. One member out of every six is a volunteer worker, serving on committees or leading a club or class in sports training or languages. The secretary declares that there is no place where one gets so much response to disinterested friendship as in Siam. In relation to the Occidental community, the Y.M.C.A. staff bridges a gap between the missionaries and the business groups.

### *Insanity and Suicide*

Until recently the absence of statistics has prevented specific knowledge of the suicide rate and the number of the Siamese insane, but the impression was general before the revolution and confirmed subsequently that both forms of mental disease are rapidly increasing.

Newspapers for many years gave the impression that the vast majority of suicides in Siam were among the Chinese. But during the years immediately succeeding the revolution, suicide grew rapidly among the Siamese. The total number of suicides between 1932 and 1935 was 1,542. Both the press and the Government took an interest in investigating this increase,<sup>7</sup> but the majority of Assembly members were against taking legal preventive action.

Dr. Heiser's criticism that much of the prevalent insanity in Siam is due to over-indulgence in hasheesh, which the Government is loath to stop because of the revenue it brings in, does not seem to be substantiated by the facts.<sup>8</sup> The Siamese have never been great drug addicts. According to the Director of the Bangkok Insane Asylum, insanity is due far more to heredity than to environment, even though it has been increasing under the new conditions attendant upon the establishment of the new régime.

In the old days the Siamese used to chain their insane to posts in the home or send them to gaol, where they were fettered in the same rooms with criminals; and this is still the usual treatment of the insane in rural Siam. Towards the end of the nineteenth cen-

tury Chulalongkorn promised a European doctor a large sum for the construction of an insane asylum. Elaborate plans were drawn up and the land bought, but almost no more money was forthcoming. Finally the doctor decided that temporary wooden structures were better than nothing, and to this day they are still in use. Almost at once he got eight hundred patients. For years beriberi kept their numbers down; but when the Health Department began to control this, the place became unbearably overcrowded. It now "accommodates" a thousand, of whom three hundred are women.

The new doctor insisted on cutting off his patients' chains and treating them as if they were sick, thereby reversing the traditional Siamese treatment of them as criminals. It was hard to keep the wardens from brutalizing the inmates, not out of cruelty but simply through ignorance. Legal restraint of the wardens was ineffectually attempted; the only way their attitude could be changed was for the wardens themselves to be humiliated and punished before the insane. This put a stop to their maltreatment but it made the insane themselves uncontrollably cocky. Occupational therapy in the form of gardening was undertaken, with considerable success.

In 1934 Nai Dong Indra pointed out that there was still only one mental hospital in all Siam and that in the provinces the insane were still locked up in prisons.<sup>9</sup> A year later the Government announced that it hoped to open provincial asylums in 1937 and denied that the insane, although housed in gaols, were treated on a par with criminals.<sup>10</sup> By 1938 a provincial asylum had been opened at Surasrathdani, and another at Lampang was nearing completion.

### *Gaming*

In the reign of Nang Klao the sale of liquor and gaming privileges were farmed to licensed individuals. People were not permitted to gamble in private but had to go to licensed establishments. Three times a year this law was suspended, the most important of these holidays being the Chinese New Year. On this occasion all classes participated; beggars became rich, and the formerly wealthy were reduced to penury. The Chinese had introduced a peculiarly seductive form of lottery, and people came to neglect productive occupations either to increase their gains thereby or to

repair their shattered fortunes. Half of the slavery and three-fourths of the crime around Bangkok, wrote one qualified observer, were due to love of gaming.<sup>11</sup> The Chinese, with government permission, encouraged this vice by opening large numbers of licensed houses and numerous pawnshops where the disposal of stolen goods became fabulously easy. The annual bids for the gaming farm were based on the rice forecast.

The majority of gamblers were Siamese peasants, who after the harvest had money in their pockets and nowhere to keep it safely; moreover they yearned to break away from the monotony of their hard and toilsome lives. There were also, but only in the cities, a number of professional gamblers who slept and ate near the Chinese houses and stole or begged money when their luck was bad. They even wore a certain costume, "the recognized uniform of ruffianism."<sup>12</sup> Yet these dregs of society showed a consistently good temper that amazed observers; and only under exceptional circumstances did they become violent, steal, or commit arson. The grip that gambling had on the population was shown by the condition of the coins then in circulation. Small coins were bent or roughened in such a way as to be more easily caught by the croupier's bamboo rake; and with the exception of pieces fresh from the mint, there were hardly any undefaced silver coins in Bangkok.

With the growth of the railroad system and the increase in rice exports, provincial as well as urban gambling increased. In the provinces lotteries seemed to be more obviously nefarious than other forms of gaming. In Mongkut's time the first state lottery was started at Petchaburi, where the king had built a palace and which was then very prosperous. Two lottery houses were built in the town, and the country people went mad over the game. So detrimental were the results on the people's welfare and on the revenues that the local authorities petitioned the king to stop it, which he did. This was the first and last attempt to run a lottery in the interior towns. Under Chulalongkorn lotteries passed to the control of the Ministry of Finance.

Card playing was introduced into Siam in the reign of Nang Klao. In those days every innovation found its way into the country via the palace. In Mongkut's and in Chulalongkorn's reigns

new card games came into vogue, and the stakes were increased; at about the same time fees were introduced for permission to play.<sup>13</sup>

Experience was slowly proving to the Government that gaming in various forms was having a demoralizing effect on the people. It was diminishing their purchasing power and taxable incomes and was also increasing the amount of crime in the country. When the Government, in 1902, pointed proudly to the decrease it had effected in the number of gaming houses through the Pawnbrokers Act, which made the disposal of stolen goods more difficult, critics noted that the revenues from the farm were nevertheless increasing. In the peak years 1904-5 Siam got 19 per cent of her total revenues and 25 per cent of the income from taxes through the gambling and lottery farms. The revenue from this farm was placed under the heading of taxation. When Chulalongkorn decided to abolish gaming in the provinces in 1906, it disappeared from the revenue statement; and the only item of the kind that was left was "card-playing and betting fees." It was too important an item of revenue to be disposed of brusquely, and the abolition of gaming in Bangkok was not effected until 1917. The limit of 3 per cent on import duties was again put forward as the chief obstacle to finding substitute revenues.

From 1906 to 1917 Bangkok became the gambling center. Popular holidays brought quantities of provincials crowding into the capital simply to play. Even children were not exempt. Numerous slot machines placed in front of native shops were always surrounded by groups of children wasting their time and their *atts* meant for food and books. Every year one of the Bangkok houses was closed, but illicit private gaming replaced the licensed establishment.

After the closing of the gaming houses in 1917, card playing took on a new popularity. The first indication that the Government recognized card playing to be a form of the gambling obsession occurred in 1913, when the old custom of allowing play without permits on the three major holidays was abolished. In 1918 a new regulation put an end to all ordinary legal facilities for gambling; but permits were still to be issued, though now only to persons playing for amusement, who were further required to

specify the time, place, and number of players. That same year the gambling and betting fees brought in Tcs. 700,000.

The new rulings, however, did not affect the usual gambling at race meetings. When the gaming houses were closing down, horse-racing forged ahead by leaps and bounds. Racing clubs were allowed to hold, in addition to the annual sweepstake, a lottery on every race. This meant that six or eight times in the course of an afternoon there was a chance for small clerks to gamble and to bring their families perilously near ruin.

Before 1906 the Bangkok Lottery had been a semi-daily affair; and this farm was not abolished until 1916, at which time it was bringing in Tcs. 3,500,000 a year. In 1925 a national lottery was organized for a million ticals. Funds flowed in, but strange rumors circulated after the draw. The winners' names were indeed published, but they were known to no one; and prizes were alleged to have been paid out on tickets that had apparently never been sold. The king appointed an investigatory committee, with the result that forty-nine persons were found to have been involved in the embezzlement, among them a high official. This official was tried and demoted, but it was a number of years before the lottery was well supported again.

Under the Gaming Law of 1930 games were divided into two classes: those wholly prohibited and those permitted under license. The organizers of the second variety, if they benefited either directly or indirectly therefrom, were required to obtain official permits.

The constitutional régime inherited its predecessor's confusing and unrealistic attitude towards gambling, namely, that it was demoralizing if for private benefit but harmless if the State used the proceeds to finance public works. In 1934 a 10 per cent tax was imposed on horse-racing receipts; and the same year the Government took the decision of running four annual lotteries of a million ticals each, to be issued in four installments. Lotteries were officially called an indirect form of taxation that the people gladly supported. Nevertheless, when a group of local Siamese, including an ex-Minister and many prosperous citizens, formed a company to open a casino to be called "Little Heaven," there was so much opposition to making Bangkok the Monte Carlo of the Far East that the Government refused permission. Public opinion, which had

supported Chulalongkorn's suppression of the gaming farm, also agreed with the new Government's stand, on the ground that the existing totalisators and four official lotteries should be sufficient to satisfy the average Siamese's need to gamble. Moreover, the Government was sure from experience that its revenues would be greater if it could continue to keep the gambling craze under control. The Assembly, after considerable debate, finally concurred.

In 1935 the Assembly showed increasing concern over the connection between the increase in crime and gambling. The lawful age for betting, both at horse races and card games, was raised from sixteen to twenty; and the Assembly voted down a proposal to halve the 10 per cent tax on racing profits. Full powers were vested in the Government to control gaming, and this included the founding of casinos.<sup>14</sup> An attempt was made to stop profiteering on the sale of lottery tickets by middlemen, especially after a serious scandal in July 1935. The new law left matters virtually where they were before. Some twenty-six games were declared to be illegal, and twenty-four others were listed for which permits costing Tcs. 100 a day were required. A maximum imprisonment of three years and a fine of Tcs. 5,000 were decreed for playing the forbidden games. The Government retained a 10 per cent charge on the gross receipts from gambling.

In the seven years during which the Government has taxed racing, it has garnered Tcs. 1,632,517, and well over half a million more from the recent lotteries, for which no tickets are ever left unsold. These funds are supposedly loaned out to the municipal councils, but so far only a small part has been so allotted.<sup>15</sup> Siam certainly runs her four annual lotteries better than she did formerly, and more economically than does Burma. The managing committee is made up of honorary officials, and the highest salary paid out is Tcs. 200 a month. The total staff numbers thirty-one, and only 3 per cent of the turnover goes towards paying expenses. In fact, it is so profitable that the Assembly is manoeuvring to acquire control over the Government's share. In 1939 a private casino was opened at Haad Yai on condition that it would not be duplicated in or near the capital, and cock and fish fighting were totally prohibited.

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## XXI · PUBLIC HEALTH

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It is curious how important a role disease has always played in Siamese history. An outbreak of pestilence among their enemies in the middle of the eighth century helped the Thais to repel the Chinese invaders from Nanchao, thereby delaying their entry into Siam by almost a century.<sup>1</sup> In 1350 the founding of Ayuthia was directly attributable to an epidemic that caused the abandonment of Utong, the previous capital. Although plague was not officially recorded in Siam until 1904, it is first mentioned under the name of *khaiphit* years before. Seven years after Ayuthia was founded, cholera was for the first time specifically cited in Siamese history. Two centuries later it was recorded that smallpox caused the death of Paramaraja IV and that the royal doctors were executed for having failed to save the king's life.<sup>2</sup>

The continual warfare that for centuries decimated the Siamese population broke down the resistance to disease among those who had survived. The physique of the farmers was still obviously more robust than that of the urban population, but all the Thais were shrinking in stature as they migrated southward. That they realized this to be the case is shown by a popular prophecy that the Thais would be no bigger than rabbits by the time they reached the sea.

The siege of Ayuthia in particular so debilitated the Siamese that they fell a prey to epidemics, and disease was partly responsible for their surrender as well as for their subsequent change of capital. During the nineteenth century terrible epidemics of smallpox and cholera periodically ravaged Bangkok.

### *Public Hygiene*

Pallegoix, Roberts, and Bradley all paid tribute to the popularity of bathing among the Siamese and to their frequent changes of garments, which were exposed to the cleansing rays of the sun.

But unfortunately their personal cleanliness was not extended to their houses, whose walls and floors were never scrubbed and which, though raised off the damp ground, were never ventilated.

Conditions in the provinces have changed little since then. To this day children are protected from flies and mosquitoes only until they are weaned, in the belief that by then they have developed sufficient resistance. The almost universal prevalence of malaria and yaws is due to inadequate protection while sleeping.<sup>3</sup> Owing to the lack of ventilation in the houses, indoor cooking during the rainy season causes serious eye troubles among the rural population.

Until the completion of the Bangkok water-works in 1914, the masses had no alternative to drinking *klong* water and buying provisions from dirt-infected bazaars. If they bathed frequently, it was also in *klongs*, "a bouillon of microbe cultures that would make even a bacteriologist pale."<sup>4</sup> Early in the eighteenth century Siam suffered from a severe famine and drought. The Menam was covered with a green slime, and so much sickness broke out that the Government forbade the people to drink from it. As there was no other water supply, rebellion threatened; and only the timely announcement that the god Indra had appeared to state that the slime was a panacea for every known disease saved the Government. What really saved the people, however, was a heavy down-pour that appeared simultaneously with Indra.

The chief cause of Siam's under-population lies in the sanitary conditions that lead to the high death rate. The amazing listlessness that the Siamese have always shown regarding contagious diseases is partly due to ignorance but even more to the resignation of *karma*. There is no conception of quarantine, and no effort is made to avoid contact with those who are suffering from leprosy or smallpox. Internal parasites have for centuries infected every drop of water in the country except in Bangkok. Although they lead outdoor lives, the Siamese possess every disease known to man.

The death rate in Siam has always moved in cycles. The recurrent epidemics breed a sort of natural immunity, but after five or ten years conditions once more favor their reappearance because a new crop of children has come along and the old immunity has disappeared.<sup>5</sup> In some places where conditions are chronically



favorable to infection many diseases ordinarily considered epidemic become endemic. A few diseases of an infectious nature, such as dysentery, are always prevalent. The vast mass of people never have ordinary diseases treated, and the death rate of the rural Siamese to this day is virtually unchecked.

### *European Medicine in Siam*

It was the missionaries who brought Western medical science to Siam. In 1676 the first medical missionary, a Jesuit, arrived in Ayuthia, where Western methods had for the past century been amateurishly practised by the Portuguese, English, and Dutch. There is, however, no evidence that hospitals existed in Siam before the French established one in 1669. Thirteen years later the valuable services they rendered during a smallpox epidemic caused the king to make gifts to the bishop, but not to emulate his example. In the early nineteenth century the Protestant missionaries introduced vaccination, trained midwifery, surgery, anaesthesia, blood transfusion, and quinine. The first Siamese literature on Western medical methods was written and printed by missionaries, who founded the first medical training school and made the first attempt to insure the purity of drugs and to care scientifically for lepers. In 1882 the first Protestant mission hospital was founded at Petchaburi. But even before these missionaries came to Siam, the Siamese were receptive to Western medicine. Dr. Finlayson, who accompanied the Crawford mission in 1821, found all Siamese anxious to get European drugs.

For years after the missionaries opened their clinics, which were patronized by lower-class Asiatics, the educated Siamese, who for centuries had survived such concoctions as sharks' teeth dissolved in snake bile, feared Western medicines as too powerful for their constitutions. Nevertheless, Western medicine began to gain ground among the tolerant Siamese in spite of certain setbacks. When Bradley, the mission doctor, operated successfully on the Minister of Agriculture for cataract, he greatly enhanced his reputation and earned the gratitude even of the distrustful Nang Klao. But royal gratitude was insufficient to produce a change in Siamese medicine. When one of Mongkut's queens was suffering after the

birth of her first child, a mission doctor saved her life. Yet many other Siamese women continued to suffer from the barbaric midwifery practised in the country, which insisted upon the closeting of a mother and new-born child for weeks in an unventilated room next to a hot fire. Mongkut told Bradley that he believed in the foreign methods, but that the feeling among his women was so strong that he let them do as they pleased.

Although Bradley's reputation was further enhanced when he cured an official of fever with quinine, it was in inoculation against smallpox that Western medicine achieved a popular triumph. In Bangkok smallpox had become regularly epidemic at intervals of every three or four years. In 1838 the scourge had been particularly severe, and for four years thereafter the missionaries vainly tried to induce the Siamese to follow the example of their children, who had been successfully safeguarded by inoculation. The king finally heard of their efforts and sent a group of royal doctors to study and report on their methods. About that time the mission press was issuing a tract in Siamese on the value of inoculation, which was widely read by the officials and princes. After seeing the mission doctors at work, the royal physicians were ordered to inoculate those in the palace who had not already had smallpox. Other physicians were ordered to follow their example, and inoculation became so popular and was so successful that it militated against the introduction of vaccination.

In January 1840 the first vaccine scabs were brought to Siam by an American missionary, but it still remained to get people to submit willingly to vaccination. Finally the Prime Minister came to the rescue and offered seventy-five children for experimentation. From them vaccine was propagated, and more than one hundred persons were subsequently vaccinated. Two years later smallpox once again appeared in epidemic form. Failing to procure fresh supplies of vaccine from abroad, the missionaries tried to propagate it on a cow; and for this purposes the enthusiastic king offered them all the cows they could desire. Work soon lapsed, however, owing to the need for fresh virus, which eventually came from the United States.

Not until 1904, a year after Prince Damrong called the first

conference of medical men to consider the health problem of the country as a whole, did the Government take over from the missionaries the preparation of vaccine in Bangkok, where a laboratory was opened under American doctors. In 1912 it was merged with the Pasteur Institute under Paris-trained physicians. The next step was to train efficient vaccinators who would accustom the public to regular vaccination. The final stage came with the promulgation of the Compulsory Vaccination Act in 1914, which made vaccination obligatory for all Bangkok Circle. The eventual aim of this act was to make all Siamese and those entering the kingdom immune to smallpox free of charge. The history of vaccination in Siam served as a refutation of those who claimed that the diminution of the disease in Europe was due more to improved sanitary conditions than to vaccination. In Siam vaccination preceded by many years any improvement in sanitation and succeeded in virtually stamping out epidemics. In country districts to this day vaccination is the only effective means used of checking the death rate. In fact, the people are so ready to be vaccinated that they are exploited by quacks. One bogus doctor even vaccinated the trusting inmates of three villages with Nestlé's canned milk.<sup>6</sup>

### *Malaria*

Siam is both a tropical and a semi-tropical country. Unfortunately from the health standpoint, its northern semi-tropical mountain area is chronically afflicted with malaria or illnesses resulting from its attacks. Malaria in the north is a major and chronic cause of death and a serious obstacle to the natural increase in population. According to a report issued in 1932 by Dr. Kerr, who lived many years among the Laos, although malaria was not so alarming to the popular mind as cholera, plague, or smallpox, it was the greatest single destroyer of the human race. He put Siam's annual death rate from this cause at about forty or fifty thousand.<sup>7</sup> About three million people are affected by it throughout the year.

In spite of periodic publicity for seventy years in regard to this deadly toll of malaria in Siam, the authorities were aroused to take active measures only when it became violently epidemic.

In parts of the peninsula, and all over the north and northeast, there are villages where nearly everyone has it, especially during the rainy season. At Nan, 70 per cent of the school children examined by Dr. Kerr were affected.

In 1930 the Government engaged a League of Nations expert, Dr. Anigstein, to investigate the mosquito problem. In his report, issued in 1931, Dr. Anigstein found that in the central plain the improvement in the economic conditions of the people resulting from irrigation and the development of agriculture had tended to keep them from contracting malaria. But the poverty of the northern rural region and the lack of medical attention had raised malaria there to the rank of a serious social problem demanding a special preventive effort. Anti-larval methods, such as oiling the streams, were impracticable; but villages in the foothills could be evacuated and the people encouraged to settle on the alluvial plains of the north, which were uncultivated because of lack of irrigation and poor soil conditions. Dr. Anigstein considered inadequate the efforts of the Department of Public Health to make every village headman buy quinine at cost price from the Government and sell it at a slender profit to those suffering from malaria. For even at cost price quinine was too expensive, and only during epidemics was it distributed free of charge. It was necessary to reorganize the whole system of distribution, to set up a trained body of sanitary inspectors for this purpose, and to popularize the use of mosquito nets. Nothing much was done to carry out the recommendations of this report beyond the establishment of malaria suppression units.

Although the lack of money, personnel, and means of communication militates against the control of malaria, experimentation has proved that the task is not impossible. In 1932 the Government succeeded in controlling malaria at Padang Basar in cooperation with the Malay Government; much against his will, the Siamese Minister of Finance at the time found the necessary funds. Malaria control is expensive, especially for a poor and under-populated country like Siam; but the Government is beginning to concern itself with rural as well as urban health. In the spring of 1938 the Assembly was informed that malaria was on the increase. The whole problem has not as yet been squarely faced.

*Beriberi*

Although beriberi has long been an active cause of sickness and death, the first experiments with regard to its cause and treatment were not made until 1909—and then in the insane asylum.<sup>8</sup> Since 1901 nearly half of the inmates there had suffered from the disease, and in more than 90 per cent of the cases death had resulted. The first reliable report on this disease in Siam refers to an outbreak that occurred in 1890 at the central gaol in Bangkok, where the mortality was also high. It appears that white steam-milled rice had been substituted there for the hand-milled variety upon which the prisoners had formerly subsisted. The prisoners themselves petitioned for a return to hand-milled rice; and when their request was granted, beriberi disappeared. The next epidemic occurred in 1897 during the construction of the northern railroad, but aside from these occasional outbreaks beriberi was unknown in the capital until 1900. From this time on it became one of the commonplace diseases of the country, traveling from Bangkok along the eastern coast of the Gulf of Siam.

When parboiled rice, prepared according to the methods of Braddon, was supplied to the inmates of the insane asylum, the beriberi there stopped at once. But when a severe outbreak occurred in the police school the members refused to eat parboiled rice because it tasted mouldy and sour. As an effective alternative, unpolished rice was adopted in place of the polished white rice to which the men were accustomed. In a paper at the first biennial congress of the Far Eastern Association of Tropical Medicine on March 11, 1910, Dr. Highet publicized the fact that rice could be shorn of its dangers as a staple article of food through the simple process of under-milling.

The next step was to experiment with producing under-milled rice in a steam ricemill on a commercial basis. This step was forced on Dr. Highet because the rice millers were up in arms against the white polished rice theory, fearing that legislation against it was imminent and would cause them heavy losses. Tests, however, soon proved that the right kind of rice could be milled cheaply and easily and in any quantity desired. In 1912 the navy substituted hand-milled for white polished rice, and it is now gen-

erally accepted in Siam that beriberi can be cheaply and easily suppressed. The whole question is tied up with a general reform in the national diet.

### *Cholera*

Although cholera was first mentioned in Siamse history in 1357, the first epidemic recorded did not occur until the summer of 1820. It appeared originally in the Malay Peninsula and on the adjacent islands and worked its way into Siam via Trang and Paknam to Bangkok.<sup>9</sup> In the absence of statistics the death rate in 1820 could only be inaccurately estimated, but the figure was put at 100,000. The next severe outbreak occurred in 1849, followed by another in 1873. The daily death toll in the latter epidemic averaged 260, and the total number of deaths amounted to 6,660, with mortality higher among men than among women. On this occasion free medicine was distributed. Although this disease claimed hundreds of victims annually, there was no permanent cholera hospital.

The problem was not adequately tackled until Bangkok received a pure water supply in 1914. Until then poor people who had not saved enough rain water had to drink from the canals. Many of the Siamese developed a semi-effective immunity, but Chinese immigrants used to die like flies.<sup>10</sup> Cholera still appears in the rural districts when the rains do not appear to wash the microbes away. Cholera germs can also be carried on food—the spread of an epidemic often follows the mango route. Although the disease has now been reduced to very small proportions, the problem cannot be effectively handled until the Government has established control over all food supplies. This is a difficult task in view of the number of private markets, which remain the greatest single cholera menace.

During epidemics the Department of Public Health distributes free anti-cholera medicine, and a sample bottle has been placed in each village. The fact that the last serious cholera epidemic occurred in 1925 shows that the campaign against it has been a marked success, and special anti-cholera units are still being sent out into the provinces under the aegis of the semi-official Red Cross.

*Leprosy*

For many years medical missionaries were the only persons who tackled the leprosy problem. In 1890 Dr. James McKean found that lepers were coming in such numbers to his compound in Chiangmai for treatment that they had to encamp on a nearby island. Feeling the need for a concerted and large-scale effort for their relief, Dr. McKean appealed for help to the local *chao*, who was one of his patients, and obtained from him an island on which he set up a model leper city with self-government, occupational therapy in the form of gardening, and individual houses caring for four hundred patients instead of the customary barracks. So successful was this experiment that it became the model for subsequent efforts in this field and has received local, foreign, and national support. In 1922 another mission asylum for one hundred lepers was founded at Nakon Sritemmerat.

In the post-war era it was felt that leprosy was too big a problem to be adequately handled by any private agency and that it could only be met by compulsory segregation; but such measures were for long thought to be too expensive. For years the only official effort was a small asylum for two hundred patients founded under Red Cross auspices at Phra Pradaeng. The Government found it impossible to get accurate leper statistics because of the census-takers' ignorance as to symptoms and because the friends and families of lepers were unwilling to have them so registered. An estimate made in 1912 put the number of lepers in the kingdom at twenty thousand, but it was generally admitted that very many more cases were incipient or hidden away and that their numbers were steadily increasing. Dr. McKean recently estimated the total at about fifty thousand, the majority being in the farming and trade communities. Probably less than 4 per cent of the lepers in Siam are now under treatment.

In an Assembly meeting in January 1934, Nai Dong Indra drew the Government's attention to its complete failure to cope with the leprosy problem in Ubol. To this the Premier replied that the Government could do nothing beyond assisting the asylum already established at Chiangmai, which had formerly received a subsidy of Tcs. 10,000 a year and was then getting Tcs. 7,200.

In addition, some of the proceeds from the state lottery had been sent to the lepers at Sritemmerat. In August of that same year the question was again discussed; but the sole result was a law forbidding the felling of the chaulmoogra trees, whose seeds are used in leprosy cures. In reply to critics who complained that lepers continued to buy food in the local markets, Dr. McDaniel of the Nakon Sritemmerat asylum replied with justice that there was no law to prevent their doing so.

In the interval of governmental inaction, the mission had evolved a revolutionary solution to the leper problem in the form of small, widely scattered clinics. The hospitalization of lepers was obviously too expensive and was also psychologically impracticable. The idea of these clinics originated when lepers who were pronounced cured at the Chiangmai asylum asked for the means of continuing treatments themselves at home. It was decided that, when ten lepers in a district were willing to receive treatment, a rudimentary clinic would be set up and supplied with chaulmoogra oil by the mission; but that the clinic should be run and the injections made by discharged lepers who had volunteered their services. Lepers could come during the day for treatment and return home at night. The cost was thereby reduced to a minimum—less than two ticals a year per clinic—and the patient's reluctance to declare his disease because it had meant leaving home was now overcome. The mission that had done the pioneer work in tackling the problem had now found the solution, and the Government could go ahead with its preventive legislation.

In September 1937 an Act was passed forbidding lepers, who had heretofore circulated freely in Bangkok and the provinces, to enter market places, schools, hotels, and entertainment halls. They were also forbidden to beg at private residences or along public highways and were required to relinquish whatever employment they were then engaged in. As part of the policy of entrusting hygienic control to the municipal authorities, the Mayor of Bangkok was charged with enforcing this Act in the city. In June 1938 the Minister of the Interior stated that according to the census of the previous year there were about 17,000 lepers and that only one thousand of them were receiving treatment in the various asylums. In addition to its municipal regulations the Gov-



ernment intends to open more settlements and is now building one at Khonkaen. Important experimental work is also being carried on in Chiangmai.

### *Plague*

Plague was first officially recorded in Siam in 1904 in the Indian quarter and was probably imported from the mother country in bales of merchandise. It remained endemic in Bangkok, with probably not more than one hundred cases a year. Not until 1905 did it spread widely, when it followed the railroad lines into the provinces. Five years later it branched off the railroad to Rahang. At this time the average number of cases annually reported in Siam since 1904 was about five thousand. The attempts to stamp out plague have of course been closely linked to the general public health measures of recent years. But they are still handicapped by ignorance and by resistance to regulations.

### *Hookworm*

The campaign against hookworm in Siam was instituted by Dr. Heiser and the Rockefeller Institute.<sup>11</sup> People naturally wondered why hookworm had been singled out by the Institute in a land riddled with tuberculosis, dysentery, beriberi, and leprosy. It was apparently because the most sceptical among the native people could actually be shown the larval forms of hookworm, whereas it was impossible to convince them of the existence of the micro-organism that caused cholera, for instance. It was regarded as a form of scientific education, and one that incidentally improved the hygienic condition of the country.

Reports showed that hookworm existed in Siam, but not to what extent; and the Rockefeller Institute was asked by the Government to open its campaign at Chiangmai, which it did in 1917. The people first had to be convinced that they were harboring any such parasites, and even the officials were so sceptical about the powerful drugs to be employed that they asked that they should first be tried out on some murderers—always a useful experimental group in Siam.

Lecture halls were set up in *wats*, hookworm charts were hung up in front of the altar, a model latrine was displayed on a teak

table inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and the history of the hook-worm was related in terms of a bedtime story. The Institute's success in Chiangmai made it possible to take up the work in Bangkok, and in 1920 the Red Cross collaborated in the continuation of this work. A survey and propaganda program was carried out in forty-four provinces; and to assure the work of continuity and permanence, it was later transferred to government auspices.

### *Tuberculosis*

Although the vast majority of Siamese are farmers, the country is a fertile field for tuberculosis since those who can so indulge themselves prefer a sedentary occupation. Few Siamese care spontaneously for sports; and the vast majority live in ill-ventilated houses. The whole problem, of course, is allied to that of better housing and education in hygiene.

In 1929 a campaign was inaugurated against tuberculosis. The Prince of Nagor Svarga appointed a committee, which included Dr. Ellis of the Rockefeller Foundation, to investigate conditions. An Anti-Tuberculosis Association was formed with little or no support except that given by the Red Cross. In 1936, 627 patients were examined in the latter's clinic. Even now the Government prefers to let the Red Cross or the municipalities do this type of pioneering work.

### *Problems of Hygiene*

In general it may be said that official efforts have been confined to medical education and propaganda in Bangkok. Sanitary control has been extended in such a mild way outside the capital that health centers nowadays affect a bare 5 per cent of the population, although the Government has just promised to set up two hundred new centers. The movement started modestly enough in Bangkok in the 1890's, when an American doctor in private practise was asked to supervise sanitary conditions in the capital. Soon afterwards, in 1897, the first Public Health Law was passed, providing for a Medical Health Officer and a city engineer.

In 1901 a maritime quarantine was instituted on the island of Phra; and with the foundation in the same year of the medical depot and vaccine laboratory, which were combined with the

Pasteur Institute in 1915, the nucleus of a Medical Department in the Ministry of the Interior was formed, the forerunner of the present national health organization. The activities of the Medical Department were at first concerned exclusively with medical matters in the interior, where epidemics were combated and prison conditions ameliorated. Nine field units exercised a technical control over such provincial hospitals as were then supposed to exist. In 1909 sanitary boards were set up in certain provincial towns, which also served as a training in municipal self-government. In 1915 these boards came under the control of the Medical Department; and seven years later a National Health Council was created to coordinate all these agencies, on which 3.6 per cent of the total budget was then being spent.

In its early years it was hard to take the Sanitary Department seriously. Its operations were confined within the old city walls, and even there its powers were strictly limited. Although Bangkok had only one medical officer, its sparse health statistics showed a miraculous freedom from cholera and the plague.<sup>12</sup> There were, in fact, no reliable vital statistics of any kind for years. The reports of the police surgeon furnished practically all the medical statistics for Bangkok, and in 1902 a tabulated list of diseases appended thereto was the first of its kind to be published in Siam.

The Department scarcely touched the main problems of the capital's sanitation at this time. The street drains first put down in Bangkok were not only ineffective and cheap half measures, but also a monument to official corruption. The Government was also desperately slow to move in the matter of water supply, and past experience gained elsewhere was not applied to new areas.

Although budgetary appropriations for public health steadily increased and the Rockefeller Foundation kept the authorities from spending sums foolishly, there was no haste in making sanitary reforms, and always the fatal tendency to do first the things that were the showiest. Thus when it was openly admitted that Bangkok's major needs were a crematorium and a sewage system, it got a new theatre; and the crematorium came twelve years later. Excessive application of book learning made one medical officer insist on fly-proofing in a country where flies are certainly not

a major pest, and on examining attendants for carriers in a town where night soil was still being generally used. The chronic excuse that there was no money was invalidated, for example, by the construction of a lavish railroad godown at Salan Kasatsuk, when in many heavily populated *monthons* the same sum would have made possible the building and equipping of a crude wooden hospital that would have made an enormous difference to the community's health and happiness. There were many old-time officials who preferred to do nothing unless they could do it on a "suitable" scale. In this respect the absolute monarchy was guilty of criminal negligence inasmuch as its major revenues came from the peasants, who were left without medical care except for the mission hospitals, which could at most treat only twenty thousand patients a year.

The control of food supplies has come to be regarded as an almost hopeless problem. Some of the worst slums in Bangkok and the notoriously insanitary public market belong to the Privy Purse. The latter was long enclosed by a set of dirty shacks, and fish destined for public consumption were kept in a filthy well nearby. After trying for four years to get this market cleaned up, the Public Health Department finally took a set of photographs and sent them to Rama VI. The king was so shocked that he ordered repairs to be undertaken at once; but government officials told him this was useless as the buildings were soon to be torn down, and in this way improvements were further held up for a period of years.

Urban and rural supplies can be regulated only when the Government controls the innumerable individual markets that spring up in every new center that comes into existence with the extension of the means of communication. In the last few years the administration has turned over a new leaf by throwing civic responsibility for the dumping of refuse and the licensing of food hawkers on the new municipal governments. As a result, market hours have been fixed; and no person can spend the night in the market place after the stalls are cleared. Dogs, diseased persons, and beggars are not allowed in the vicinity of the markets; and a licensing system is used as the means of enforcement. In July 1938 fifteen markets were closed for their failure to comply with these

rules. As a supplementary activity, the Bangkok Municipal Council built three electric crematoria.

The delegation of sanitary problems to the local authorities has brought with it a realization that the whole country needs an education in hygiene. Responsibility for disease in the Orient rests principally upon the lack of cleanly habits. Since malnutrition is now recognized as primarily a problem of ignorance rather than of poverty, a campaign is being inaugurated to institute a more balanced diet. To build up better physique, playgrounds are being opened for Bangkok children, who heretofore have had to use the city streets. Annual competitions in sports have been instituted on the Pramane grounds, and a stadium is to be constructed at a cost of Tcs. 400,000.

In 1922 the Public Health Department seized the occasion of the first conference of the Oriental Red Cross Societies to hold a health exhibit in the royal garden. Within two weeks it was visited by 220,746 people, about two-thirds of the population of Bangkok. In some provinces the influence of the priests was enlisted in the fight against disease, but a project launched for the medical inspection of schools had to be postponed for lack of funds. In the meantime posters were put up to keep the public interest from flagging. One showed a woman fleeing from an elephant, with the information appended that the rats and fleas that she gladly suffered around her every day were far more dangerous. In recent years propaganda pictures have been posted in railroad and post offices, showing the death agonies of a man who has drunk canal water and the life history of the mosquito and the fly. But the sums allotted for such publicity have been too meagre for effective results, which can only be achieved through legislation. Under the old régime the Public Health Department was handicapped by the lack of authority to enforce even the simplest rules of sanitation. It was not until after the *coup d'état* of 1932 that the long-projected sanitary code was finally put into execution.

### *Diet*

In 1821 Dr. Finlayson observed that there was almost no Siamese of high rank who was not stout, and from this he concluded

that the Siamese did not strictly observe Buddhist injunctions against taking the life of animals and fish. Not that they were directly responsible, but they felt no qualms about buying from those who killed them. This inconsistency was exemplified by the royal gesture of farming out fishing rights to the highest bidder and then on different occasions piously liberating quantities of the fish that had been so caught.

Although there are marked regional and racial culinary differences, rice with fish curry is the staple article of diet throughout the whole country. Animal food is almost never consumed by the poorer Siamese. Meat, poultry, and eggs are used less than twice a month by the average Siamese family. The Siamese find European flavors insipid and delight in strong and aromatic food of all kinds—decayed prawns, salted eggs, hot sauces, sweets, and savory condiments. They love fruit and excel in the art of preparing it. Salt is consumed in large quantities, probably because of the lack of animal food in their diet. Vegetables are eaten daily with seasonal variations; and areca and betel nut are chewed continually, though less so nowadays by the younger Siamese.

The saving factor in the lives of young children is that they are generally breast-fed until a younger child appears.<sup>13</sup> It is the transition from a milk diet rich in proteins to a rice diet with little or no proteins that causes hardship, and the ensuing rounded abdomens do not retreat until the children are seven or eight years old. But their sufferings are not over then; for soon come intestinal parasites and possibilities of malarial infection.

The difference in the kind of rice and in the quantity of fish consumed is the basic division between northern and southern Siam. Glutinous rice is eaten in the north and non-glutinous white rice in the center and the south, and both are often cooked in coconut milk. Adults average about 2,000 calories a day in these white rice areas and about 2,500 in the glutinous areas.<sup>14</sup> The white rice peoples are generally wealthier and live nearer the water, where they can supplement their diet with more fish foods. The glutinous rice peoples live far from the mills and pound their rice themselves, which leaves more phosphate and nitrates in the grain. A curious taste for insects and lizards has persisted not only among the primitive mountain tribes but also among the Laos.

Giant water bugs are considered special delicacies on a menu of varied ingenuity. In this connection it is interesting to note that the protein content of roasted spiders is as high as 63.4 per cent, whereas that of fish is only 18 to 23 per cent. Not so much can be said for the jungle roots that too often substitute for a poor rice crop.

In recent years the physique of the Siamese has been affected by two mutually counteracting factors. On the one hand, it has been improved by the increasing popularity of sports and by the beneficial effects of military service. On the other hand, despite the growth of the habit of meat-eating among the upper classes, the growing dietary deficiency has been a very important adverse factor.

The most harmful aspect of this dietary change has been the rapid transition from pounded to milled rice that has come with the transformation of a self-sufficient to a commercialized agricultural community. The fact that the well-to-do are the first to buy the milled rice, with its beriberi implications, shows that this change of diet is the result of ignorance about dietary values and is not due to lack of money or to the pressure of population on natural resources. The second major change has been due to the decline in fresh fish supplies owing to over-fishing, the reclaiming of swamps for agricultural cultivation, and the increasing substitution of imported dried or smoked fish for the local fresh fish. The Government is trying to remedy this decreasing supply, but nutritive deficiency is more a matter of education than of economics.

Siam has recognized the importance of the nutrition problem. Writing in the official health bulletin for November 1936, Dr. Yong Hua Juacharoengyongs, a Harvard graduate, came to the conclusion that the traditional Siamese diet of large quantities of rice and pepper, with only a little fish, eggs, and other animal food, must be promptly changed. Siam should not find it difficult to change the national diet; the country is under-populated and the soil is fertile. The vernacular press is favoring the new food doctrines, and the encouragement of a modern balanced diet is becoming one of the fundamental tasks of the Public Health Department. Fortunately Siam's tradition of tolerance towards

new ideas will help the authorities to overcome superstitions and religious taboos about consuming the animal food that the farmers are now being encouraged to produce.

*The Economic Aspect of the Health Problem*

Quinine is too expensive even at cost price, at which the Government sells it. Dr. McKean of Chiangmai experimented in reducing its cost to one *satang*, as compared with the market price of two to three *satangs*; but as patients must take twelve or fourteen *satangs*' worth a day for the treatment to be effective, quinine is still an impossible remedy for the vast majority of the population. Substitutes for quinine, notably an atrophine product, are also too expensive; but it has not yet been proved that Siam cannot grow quinine herself.

The lowered cost of medical care in cases of leprosy is much more encouraging. One district on the banks of the Tachin and Prasak rivers is capable of producing 33,000 litres of chaulmoogra oil annually, and there are other potential producing areas in the south. A private firm in Bangkok has long made an oil that is exported all over the world, especially to China, for certain skin diseases. If industrial uses could be found for the lower grade residue of this oil, it would help to reduce the production costs. Although at present it costs only 50 *satangs* to treat one leper for a year with this oil, even this low price is too high.

Before the depression the annual expenditure on medical care by the average family was Tcs. 5.90 in the center; Tcs. 2.80 in the north; Tcs. 2.70 in the south; and Tcs. 1.60 in the northeast. Of the net income of the rural masses, between 2 and 3 per cent is spent on native medicine and on childbirth. In the aggregate this represents a fairly large sum—Tcs. 6,500,000 a year. In central Siam the average cost of a funeral is Tcs. 69, and of a birth, Tcs. 4; the corresponding figures for the north are Tcs. 26 and Tcs. 1, and for the south, Tcs. 17 and Tcs. 3. These sums represent both merit-making and cremation expenses and show that in the average Siamese family budget the costs of death are far more than those of medical attention for the living.

Since native medicine is the great competitor of Western medical science, the major problem is to divorce country people from



their servitude to quacks as soon as possible. The rural populace receives good medical treatment only from the missions, and to a much smaller extent from the Government; and in both cases it is given either free or for a nominal sum. What medicine they can afford to buy comes from native doctors. In the provincial towns only officials and prosperous merchants pay for hospitalization. In 1930 the Government reported medical officers in only forty-five out of seventy-nine provinces; and in the post-war period the eleven mission stations have been responsible for healing, free of charge and with a staff of forty-three doctors, at least 3 per cent of the entire population. The present rapid increase of the population, which is at the rate of 2 to 3 per cent a year, can only be explained by the fact that a little Western medicine, even though crudely applied, has had a cumulative effect in restraining the death rate by building up resistance to disease. Tackling the simple ailments that chiefly attack the population is the main problem and is not so complicated as is generally supposed.

In 1898 a nursing home was opened in Bangkok to supply nurses for the European community, and its continued survival has always depended solely on public support. Although Europeans had a ward in Wang Lang hospital, founded in 1887, and received the major attention in the St. Louis hospital, founded in 1898, both of these institutions antedated the presence of European trained nurses.

The dreadful midwifery methods prevalent in Siam persuaded the Protestant missions to send a Siamese girl to America for training in 1857. This girl became the first trained Siamese midwife, and upon her return she served the upper-class women. Queen Saovabha was the first Siamese lady to take an interest in the midwifery problem, and in 1883 she persuaded the king to send four girls to England for training. Eleven years later they returned with a missionary to teach girls in the country to become midwives. Although this proved to be a failure, the queen opened a midwifery school in 1897, which in the twenty-four years before it was taken over by the Rockefeller Foundation, turned out 398 trained and registered midwives. Nurses are now also being trained in the McCormick Hospital at Chiangmai. But infant mor-

tality is still appallingly high; in 1938, 46,217 infants died at birth or during their first year.

In the old days, and still to a large extent in the provinces, patients were nursed by their friends and relatives, each nursing his or her own sex. Needless to say, there was no proper training; the sick room was closed up to keep out sun and air; and the whole place was cluttered up with cooking utensils and the family. There was no one to see that the medicine prescribed by the doctor was properly taken, if at all. At first tradition was so strong that only male nurses could be trained, and then only for work in hospitals. This project, begun in 1906, was given up in 1925 when Siamese prejudices against women nurses had largely disappeared.

### *Medical Policy and Education*

Government medical policy consists chiefly of medical education in Bangkok, and of a vague sanitary control in the provinces, whose medical care, until very recent years, has been exclusively in mission hands.

Formerly when epidemics occurred, the Siamese kings would erect temporary hospitals in Bangkok, which were dismantled when the emergency was over. The last such hospital was built in 1882, when Chulalongkorn came to realize the necessity of having some permanent building; and this eventually led to the construction of Siriraj hospital, opened in 1888. The teaching of medicine there began the following year, and the first class of nine members graduated in 1893. In 1902 the course was lengthened to four years; in 1911, to five years; and in 1915, to six years. Two years later this medical school was amalgamated with Chulalongkorn University. In conjunction with the Rockefeller Foundation the school was reorganized in 1923; new professors were employed, bringing the teaching staff up to twenty; and the standards were raised appreciably. Five years later the M. B. degree was given, and shortly afterwards women were admitted as students. The school was under the control of the Minister of the Interior, who was tending to exercise more influence over all aspects of medical training and practise.

The entrance requirements to Bangkok's medical school were

officially those of the eighth grade, but actually any literate male of average intelligence was admitted. The equipment was so inadequate that there was not one microscope available for student use, and only six serviceable microscopes in the whole country. There were at first no laboratory facilities; and when finally these were acquired, they were housed in a building across the river from the hospital. In addition to the regular curriculum, a course in Siamese therapeutics taught the application of local herbs, flowers, and ground sharks' teeth. Chinese materia medica was impartially included, and no test was made to ascertain the medical value of the drugs prescribed. Sometimes the study of anatomy was entirely omitted either because no teacher was available or because students objected to the odor of the dissecting room. The Siamese textbooks that were used could not be kept up to date because the language lacked the means of expressing scientific terminology and the Siamese could be persuaded to use a European language only when their own was proven wholly inadequate. Responsibility for this state of affairs was both within and beyond Siamese control.

Certain political factors were victimizing medical education. Before most regulations could be put into effect, the consent of the treaty powers had to be secured; and such health organizations as existed were in the hands of foreigners. The British and French opposed the appointment of American medical officers and by means of their extraterritorial privileges kept the control in their own hands, without living up to the responsibilities thus incurred. The French head of the Pasteur Institute was preoccupied with his private practice; and when he was called to the front during the war, the Institute became disorganized under the unsupervised direction of Siamese, who were, furthermore, not permitted to make any vaccine themselves. Installing the Rockefeller Foundation involved delicate manoeuvring by the Government in view of the jealousy of the rival powers. Eventually public health became a recognized zone of American influence, just as the British controlled finance, and the French, the law.

Psychologically the Siamese attitude was very complicated. In the national character there was a greater readiness to please and to promise than to accomplish. Prince Rangsit was an out-

standing exception, but his efforts availed little amidst the general inefficiency; and he succeeded in repairing only a few buildings and constructing a few lecture rooms. The students themselves did not grasp Western medical ideals; in fact the Siamese had no special reverence for the M.D. degree, and the ideal of medicine as a public service or as abstract research was wholly alien to them. The primary trouble was laziness and a chronic dislike of manual labor. Students were willing enough to study the steps of an operation from a textbook but not to perform it. They also objected to examinations; and the authorities obligingly omitted them and often even shortened the course for favorite pupils, who could thereby graduate in less than two years.

In trying to change this state of affairs, reformers ran into another psychological obstacle in the form of nascent Siamese nationalism. The king, who had been sufficiently interested in medical progress to pay for a year's vaccination campaign out of his own pocket, was more absorbed in his theatrical, military, and *wat* restoration projects than in seriously improving medical education. Only when he grasped the fact that the Rockefeller policy aimed at replacing the foreign staff by trained Siamese did he pledge his support. Quite different was the attitude of the heir apparent, Prince Mahidol, who was himself a pioneer expert in Siamese sanitation and who played the role of intermediary between the Government and the Rockefeller Foundation, contributing land, buildings, and Tcs. 1,250,000.

In 1926, as part of the retrenchment policy attendant on Prajadhipok's accession, the office of medical officer, then held by Dr. R. W. Mendelson, was abolished. Everyone regretted the departure of a man who was considered to be the best surgeon in the country and whose ten years' services in making Bangkok a healthy city should not have been thus summarily dispensed with. This was the signal for the international health division to withdraw—at least until the Government on its own initiative should present a sound plan for continued cooperation.<sup>18</sup> The general Siamese attitude was that the Rockefeller Foundation was forcing the Siamese to do something that they were not sure they wanted to do and that the fellowships it offered were bribes in disguise. In 1929 the Foundation, which had spent \$260,000 in

Siam between the years 1913 and 1929, finally completely withdrew from the country, except for one able and popular doctor, L. Schapiro, who pushed sanitary engineering and health centers, but who was not replaced when he died.

To another Rockefeller Foundation doctor, A. G. Ellis, who was employed by the Siamese Government, belongs the major credit for building up the medical school in Bangkok; and upon his retirement in 1937 he had the satisfaction of having developed a school with a completely Siamese faculty, second to none in the Far East. Unfortunately this excellent institution turned out an average of only twenty doctors a year, and now probably not more than seven hundred qualified doctors are practising in the whole country. Of these, 56 per cent are employed by the Government; 26 per cent are in the army and navy; 6 per cent in the Red Cross; and less than 2 per cent in private practice—all of them in Bangkok.<sup>16</sup>

The Siamese doctor trained abroad expects an income of not less than Tcs. 240 to Tcs. 300 a month, and a graduate of Bangkok Medical School expects from Tcs. 160 to Tcs. 220 a month; in either case this is possible only in a government position or from private practice in the capital. Even if the provinces could afford to pay for Western medical treatment, it would take another four hundred years, at the present rate of production, before there would be enough physicians to cope with the work. The medical standard that has been set up in Siam is considered expensive, even according to American standards. But the problem of adequate medical treatment for the provinces involves many complicating factors, one of the worst of which is local medical politics.

In trying to estimate the justice of Zimmerman's allegation that the standards of medical education have been made altogether too high and too expensive, one has to consider the viewpoint of Dr. Ellis and his group of Siriraj doctors and the reaction of the Siamese people to Western medicine generally. With the exception of smallpox vaccination, one can say that Western medicine has never been really popular, chiefly because there has not been enough of it. Ignorant Siamese still prefer native doctors with a good bedside manner.

Time has broken down the long-standing distrust of operations

in hospitals, as is shown by the rapid growth of the wards. In the old days, when a death occurred, the beds of all the other patients who were able to walk or to be carried off by their relatives were miraculously emptied. Now they are only empty at harvest time when every hand is needed. Although people still refuse to report cases of leprosy and to kill mad dogs and snakes, this is due to a superstitious ignorance that is gradually being overcome. Belief in charms and confidence in local quacks is hard to eradicate, but it is strongest in the regions that have been most neglected by Western medicine. In the absence of Siamese clinics in the northeast, the Siamese cross over to Indo-China for treatment at the Vientiane clinics. The absence of religious taboos is a very encouraging feature.

One handicap that still persists is the time and energy consumed in getting the consent of all the patient's relatives to an operation and in making them understand that the doctor cannot be held responsible—at a time when a few minutes may mean the life or death of the patient. In the case of royalty the formalities that have to be gone through in prescribing even a cathartic are formidable, and in any case there is usually no one to see that the medicine is taken in the proper dosage. Though many say that the Siamese are too poor to pay for Western medicine, a considerable sum is spent annually on unqualified practitioners; but far more serious is the fact that there are not enough Western-trained doctors to go around.

Zimmerman launched the idea of a "junior doctor" system for rural peoples, which, however, had been advocated in a less effective manner by others before him. He felt that the cost of training medical men, and also their period of study, should be reduced. This could be done by omitting the study of a foreign language and by training them without elaborate technique to handle the simple diseases from which the majority of the people suffered. As quickly as possible, after a two years' course, they should be sent to make tours of the country with a traveling pharmacy and accompanied by a trained midwife. They should return periodically to the hospitals for further training or for examination and should not be permitted to indulge in surgery or to treat complicated cases. Either it was a case of doing this on a large scale or

of doing virtually nothing, and there was no use in aiming at perfection in a country where ten million people were wholly without medical care. The number of fully qualified doctors is now one to every ten thousand of the population.

Dr. Ellis, the chief opponent of this idea, contended that the hundreds of young men required for this two years' course would not apply if they were not guaranteed lucrative positions, and that upon completion of their course they would refuse to leave Bangkok, which was already over-staffed with physicians.<sup>17</sup> There was no demand for practitioners of modern science outside the larger population centers. The way to create such a demand, and thereby reduce the death rate, was gradually to establish hospitals throughout the country under fully qualified men paid by the Government. The medical school, though it turned out only a score of men annually, graduated about as many as the country could absorb. The administration should settle on a policy of medical education and a system for providing the country with hospitals. It was dangerous to unleash a set of uncontrollable, poorly trained doctors and thus to drag down the high standard of medical education that had been so painfully set up.

The issue has become involved in bitter local medical politics and most of the opposition is based upon jealousy. The split of Bangkok's doctors into rival cliques has been noxious to their work and prestige, and wholly unnecessary in view of the lack of competition in a country that is under-staffed medically. There is no point, for instance, in having two medical journals, and this is one of the least harmful forms of their rivalry. One of the worst has been the prosecution of a foreign doctor and midwife, in which nationalism has entered the lists of a profession that should be above petty strife. By the medical law of 1937 the diplomas of foreign doctors must be passed on, and an examination taken in the Siamese language.

Unfortunately the fully qualified doctors of Siam have not shown an idealism commensurate with their training or abilities, or with the example set by mission doctors. They tend to regard their profession as a business like any other, with office hours like those of officials. With reluctance they serve in the provinces, even with a government salary attached, and seem to feel they are there to care

for other civil servants and prisoners rather than the local people.

In this dispute the Government has not taken sides. In its limited adoption of the junior doctor project, the Government was more willing to listen to Zimmerman because he was an unofficial adviser. But in June 1935 there was general surprise when it was announced that a school for junior doctors would be opened at Chiangmai although the Bangkok Faculty of Medicine had made it clear that it would not support the idea. They were not to be trained in any great numbers and were to be placed under a medical officer and salaried at Tcs. 34 to Tcs. 50 a month. They were excluded from private practice. Zimmerman's suggestion of a two years' course was scaled down to six months—just about adequate for turning out a worthy hospital orderly. In 1935 McCormick graduated twenty-nine such "medical assistants," as they were called, and thirty in the following year; since then about fifty have completed the course each year. Chulalongkorn University now admits forty-seven men with nursing experience, and more have applied than at present can be taken. The Government has shown broadmindedness in trying out this idea, but as yet it is too soon to tell whether or not all the gloomy forecasts were justified.

Under the old régime official policy brought private practice increasingly under government control. In 1928 a medical law was enforced whereby all doctors had to be registered and licensed by the Medical Board. Unqualified doctors were tolerated only as a temporary measure because they had been practising before the law was promulgated. The constitutional régime thus put legislative teeth into what had formerly been merely projected and took active steps to raise the medical standards.

In its statement of national policy in December 1932, the new Government bravely proposed to establish hospitals and health centers in every *changvad*, to control infectious diseases, and to reorganize the sanitary boards. In July 1934 a Public Health Act was drafted that regulated more strictly the disposal of refuse and the control of certain trades that were thought to be injurious to public health and of insanitary housing, markets, abattoirs, private water supplies, and crematoria. The following November



a committee was appointed to receive suggestions regarding public health, notably in regard to provincial supplies of food and medicine.

Although the Medical Law of 1914-15 provided for some control of contagious diseases, it was inadequate and had to be supplemented by another Act in March 1935. Similarly, when the Pharmacy Law of 1924-25 proved inadequate as a means of controlling habit-forming drugs, pharmacists were divided into qualified and unqualified groups; and a new rule was added listing the drugs that only the Class 1 pharmacists could dispense. Pharmacy has not been a popular study in Siam and has gained little ground, as was shown in July 1938 when a vernacular paper carried a notice offering Tcs. 10,000 for a live rhinoceros to be used for medical purposes. A supplementary law now deals with the sale of medicines, from both the pharmaceutical and the advertising viewpoints. If this new law has accomplished nothing else, it has rid the vernacular press of the unsupported claims of drug manufacturers. Unfortunately worthy patent medicines have also been banished—perhaps only temporarily—in the Assembly's anxiety to control quack medical care and misrepresentation in advertising.

Most important of all medical legislation was the law of October 1937, which for the first time laid down definite rules for the medical profession. The powers of the Medical Council were outlined, and legislation was made uniform throughout the country. Two licenses were to be given, one for qualified and another for assistant physicians; and their respective spheres of activity were defined, as was the scale of fees that they could charge. Unfortunately this Act gave full permission to practise only to fully qualified doctors; second-class physicians could be promoted only by passing the annual examination given by the Medical Council. This has meant the closing down of a number of useful mission clinics and many second-class pharmacies. Siam is not yet ready for such perfectionist measures outside Bangkok, especially as her official medical record does not show extensive activity or impeccable standards. For example, Tcs. 20,000 was spent on a government hospital at Nakon Pathom, which is so poorly equipped that it cannot perform even an emergency operation.

Although the Government has not lived up to its self-imposed

ideals, it has speeded up execution of the policy laid down by the absolute monarchy. The administration sustained a defeat in the Assembly on its draft bill to control prostitution; but two years later the first clinic to treat venereal diseases was opened in Bangkok. The Assembly also voted down a bill to permit either party before marriage to demand a clean bill of health.

Of the more serious diseases, smallpox has been brought under control; the bubonic plague nearly so; and cholera has been all but wiped out. At present Siam has the brightest record in the League of Nations Far Eastern Health Bulletin; and Bangkok, in spite of its past reputation for filth, is the envy of other Oriental cities of the same size or larger.

In the case of the more widespread and less dramatic diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, and dysentery, their suppression is a long and expensive business. So far little has been accomplished. At present there is only one partially or wholly qualified doctor for every 531 people. The Government's policy is to encourage in every way young men taking up this profession, despite the six years of training required. The State is erecting more buildings for the sciences at Chulalongkorn University and is enlarging the medical faculty. About twelve medical students are now working abroad and are financed by the various scholarship funds.

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## XXII · OPIUM

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Opium smoking, popularized by the Muslims as a substitute for alcohol, was known in Java in the eighteenth century, when its use was extended to southeastern Asia by Portuguese merchants trading in Malaya and Siam. But its presence in Siam is not recorded until the reign of Rama III, when great and vain efforts were made to suppress its use; on one occasion the king had a large quantity publicly burned. Because this and subsequent efforts failed, its sale was finally permitted as a state monopoly. However, the king was still strongly opposed to its use and barely avoided trouble with the Straits Government when he stopped its trading boats laden with opium for Siam from entering his territorial waters.

Mongkut, also against his will, was forced to farm out the opium monopoly to a Chinese. But he simultaneously took steps to prevent the habit from spreading to his own people. Those Siamese who had become addicts were forced to wear the Chinese queue and to pay an annual fine. If they refused to do this, as well as to give up opium, they were liable to be executed. Needless to say, this law became void; but the Siamese never took to opium smoking to any great extent. In 1871 another law prohibited the import of raw opium except under licenses issued by the Minister of Finance.

### *Administration of the Monopoly*

When the monopoly was first established, it was almost wholly for financial purposes; and for many years it continued to be administered by the Finance Ministry as a matter of convenience. But since its administration was divided among three Ministries, each following independent and often divergent policies, it soon became extensively complicated. By and large the Finance Ministry exercised the principal control; chiefly through the Customs

Department, which handled the importation of opium; but the practical enforcement of the opium laws lay with the Ministry of the Interior, and the international aspect was the province of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Realizing that no constructive work could emanate from such dissipated control, or from the various special committees periodically formed to review the situation at a given moment, Rama VI created an independent opium commission to advise on administrative but not on fundamental policy. After the *coup d'état* of 1932 the Opium and Excise Departments were finally amalgamated as an economy measure.

In the general financial reorganization that occurred about 1900, the opium farm was naturally included in the policy of intensifying revenues without recourse to heavier taxation. By concentrating in the hands of a single farmer several fields that were formerly farmed out separately, both expenses and smuggling were simultaneously reduced.

In 1908 Chulalongkorn first expounded a national opium policy, which Siam has followed, at least in theory, ever since. The king expressed himself strongly on the evil effects of the drug; but he recognized that its suppression, or even its partial control, would result in reduced revenues and increased smuggling. He decided, therefore, to abolish the farm immediately and to set up a State monopoly.

whereby the spread of the opium habit among our people shall be gradually lessened until it shall be entirely passed.

In keeping with this policy, Siam participated in the Shanghai Conference of 1909 and has been subsequently represented at every similar conference and a party to all the international agreements.

### *International Relations*

The International aspect of Siam's opium problem has been tied up with the bigger issue of the revision of her extraterritorial treaties. By the Bowring-type treaties Siamese import duties could not exceed 3 per cent *ad valorem*, which meant that she had no means of taxing opium out of the country and that all potential resources of income had to be utilized. This initial handicap in

fighting opium was not lifted until the treaty revisions in the 1920's.

When the *régie* was established, Siam was importing raw opium from Benares and Yunnan; in 1920-21 the quantities were 93,742 kilos and 7,321 kilos respectively. Purchases from the latter source ceased in 1922, about five years before India officially began to prohibit the exportation of her opium for other than medical purposes. The progressive diminution of the Indian supplies before that time caused Siam to purchase Persian opium. By 1928 the total quantity of legally imported opium had declined only 6 per cent in twenty years, while the total expenditures for opium over the same period had increased by 250 per cent.

In the early attempt to control smuggling, extraterritoriality complications played an important role. In 1901 the largest single contraband seizure up to that time was made on an Englishman's launch flying the tricolor; it consisted of 10,000 *taels* of opium valued at Tcs. 50,000. When smugglers could show foreign identity papers, they were exempt from Siamese jurisdiction; and the same was true for keepers of divans and gaming houses.

### *Opium Revenues*

In 1917 opium furnished 25 per cent of the national revenues; in 1922, 21 per cent; in 1926, 17 per cent; in 1927, 15 per cent; and in 1928, 18 per cent. Just before the revolution opium revenues fell off again; but at the Opium Conference of 1931 it was learned that Siam still received a bigger revenue from opium than from excise duties—Tcs. 11,900,000 as compared with Tcs. 9,600,000. In 1934 the low mark in opium revenues, Tcs. 8,000,000, was due to several factors: the depression, the repatriation of many Chinese, the growth of the illicit traffic, and the reduction in monopoly prices made to offset these factors. In 1936-37 revenues once more went up to Tcs. 10,000,000. In general it may be said that opium revenues have followed fluctuations in the national income.

### *Sale and Distribution*

The Hague Convention of 1912, the first international agreement to which Siam was party, and the subsequent agreements of

1925 and 1931, resulted in Siam's promulgation of various opium laws in 1921, 1929, and 1934. Provision is made in one of the clauses of the law of 1921 for the registration of smokers, on the ground that legislation for those already addicted is impracticable, but that under a properly controlled system the State can prevent the habit from being formed. In signing the Geneva Agreement of 1925, the Siamese delegates expressed the hope that the registration system could be put into force within three years; but they asserted that, before this would be possible, contraband supplies would have to be controlled since further restrictions would probably only furnish a greater incentive to smuggling.

When the 1925 agreement was formally ratified, the Government reserved the right to sell dross to persons medically certified to be addicts. There was to be no immediate registration except of those allowed to smoke outside the public divans, of whom there were about 526 in 1927-28. These individuals consisted either of those who were of such high social standing that they could not be expected to go to the government shops, or of those who were incapacitated from attending them by illness or distance. In certain inaccessible mining and lumber regions the proprietors were granted licenses to run their own shops. The unpopularity of this compulsory smoking in public establishments has certainly been one cause of the growth of the illicit traffic.

As the illicit trade has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, the popular feeling against the registration of smokers has grown steadily stronger. The Government, however, continues to announce that the registration and licensing of smokers will be undertaken as soon as practicable, that is, when smuggling and production have been successfully controlled.

The two distinctive features of the Geneva Agreement of 1925 as applied to Siam were the compulsory return of opium dross to the State and the opening of government shops. At that time 2,580 licenses were auctioned off throughout the whole kingdom for divans where opium could legally be bought and where it had to be smoked. As these licenses expired, the Government intended to take over control. In the first year the State opened forty-two shops as an experiment, but the process was retarded by the difficulties met in staffing these divans.

Divans were open day and night, and there was no limit placed on the amount of opium that might be smoked there. Government management has decreased rather than increased the amount of opium sold. In the peak revenue year, 1918-19, the State was selling only slightly more than it had sold a decade before; but the price of monopoly opium had been gradually raised until its revenues nearly doubled the 1909 figure. By 1936 there were only 106 shops directly run by the State, as compared with 778 managed by licensed vendors.

As had been anticipated, there was at first a falling off in sales through the transfer of patronage to shops not yet brought under state control; but this was largely offset by the *régie's* retention of a greater percentage of the dross from its own dens than from the licensed shops. At the same time it was found possible to use a larger proportion of the cheaper Persian opium in the monopoly output. Moreover, it was easier to control smoking in a thousand shops than in a hundred thousand homes; for no person, with about five hundred authorized exceptions, could have opium legally in his possession.

The *régie's* price policy has changed radically within the last few years. At first it was decided to sell opium at a figure that, while not prohibitive, would still make it a luxury; and this price was consistently raised until the late 1920's. But the policy of increasing the price and not the number of government shops had only succeeded in driving the illicit traffic underground; for by then contraband had begun to cut into monopoly sales to a point where obviously any further turn of the screw would simply mean playing into the hands of the smugglers. In the north, where the illicit trade was most prevalent, monopoly opium sold for Tcs. 11.40 a *tael*, as against Tcs. 5 or Tcs. 6 for the smuggled article. In Bangkok the difference was less great—Tcs. 15 as against Tcs. 8 or Tcs. 10—because by 1930 the Government had decided to reduce the price of its opium in certain districts so as to weaken the incentive to buy contraband. The general price scale is now Tcs. 5 along the northern frontier and Tcs. 15 in the capital. This staggering of the price at once increased the *régie's* sales in the north by 197 per cent at the expense of the illicit traffic. It was therefore decided to extend the lower price to fourteen

more districts, with the result that the average price of monopoly opium is now Tcs 8.69 per *tael*.

### *Preventive Measures*

The work of the preventive service consists in dispensing rewards for information and in imposing penalties for legal violations. The penalties, until recently, consisted of a fine of four times the value of the opium smuggled and/or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, these penalties being increased for second offenders at the wide discretion of the judge. Preventive work is carried out by four organizations: the Opium Department, the police, the regular administration, and a special section of the Customs Department. In general, the police control the illicit overland contraband; and the customs, the sea-borne traffic. The work is very arduous in the north owing to the rugged and impenetrable character of the country, of which the smugglers have a unique knowledge. Moreover, Siam is honeycombed with waterways, over which there is extensive<sup>1</sup> traffic. The preventive service, therefore, relies chiefly on information, for which liberal rewards are paid.

In twelve provinces, there is a special preventive service headed by an officer in charge of twenty-five to thirty agents. Their task is made easier by the fact that in Siam the mere possession of opium dross and pipe, not to mention smoking outside licensed establishments (with very few exceptions), is illegal; and to obtain conviction they have only to prove possession.

The work of the preventive service is not supported by public opinion. In Chiengrai, which is the center of the illicit trade, all classes and all nationalities take part in smuggling. A valise full of opium means a fortune to a Siamese. Vehicles are only perfunctorily examined at the four police barricades along the only motor road in the region, which leads to Lampang. Being caught is simply regarded as bad luck, and it never happens except when the police have been tipped off. Through contraband connections a gendarme who gets from Tcs. 20 to Tcs. 60 a month can easily triple his income. The risks involved and the many palms that have to be oiled along the way account for the difference in the cost of the contraband article at the frontier and in the capital.



In November 1935 the Assembly increased the prison sentence for smuggling from two to ten years and raised the fine from four to five times the value of the opium smuggled. This, however, did not reduce the illicit sales, but rather seemed to increase them. Later, when the *régie* decided to raise its own opium, penalties were made still more severe, especially against unauthorized cultivation, which was made punishable by a year's imprisonment and a thousand tical fine. The penalty for enticing others to deal in illicit opium was fixed at three years in prison and a Tcs. 10,000 fine. But in 1937, 11,809 opium offenses were detected, the largest number ever recorded.

The importance of these large seizures is indicated by the fact that from 1932 to 1935 the Government imported no raw opium from abroad, since it obtained all it needed from the seizure of illicit opium, and the payment of rewards was less expensive than the cost of importing the article. When seizures are estimated as representing only a fraction of the total contraband traffic, it is obvious that the continuous decline in monopoly sales is due to the increased smoking of illicit opium rather than to any diminution in the total quantity consumed. In 1936, 18 per cent, and in 1937 about 16 per cent, of the amount sold by the Government was seized as illicit opium by the preventive service.

### *The Contraband Trade*

Large-scale smuggling of opium began in Siam only shortly after the Geneva Conference of 1924, though it had existed ever since importation was restricted into Siam. The nature of Siam's land and sea frontier makes it virtually impossible to prevent the entry of China's large and ever-growing surplus.

Smuggling is well organized in Siam, with the main opium ring at Bangkok, its agents all along the transport lines, and the pay-off center at Lampang. Usually its agents cross the border and buy from the innumerable small poppy growers, at about a tical a *tael*. The smugglers are usually Chinese, though they have the cooperation of all nationalities. They have enough money to bribe the underpaid Siamese officials and to hire poor men to take the rap. Frequently the servants of eminent men are bribed to smuggle opium in their masters' luggage, as the British consul at Chiangmai

once discovered to his embarrassment. When men are caught or betrayed to the police, it is like lopping off the branches without uprooting the tree; for the key men are never caught.

The distribution of illicit opium does not usually take place by hawking or in brothels since the latter are fairly strictly controlled. The regular method is to place it in houses already known to customers. Since 1929 these distribution centers have become principally the licensed divans, whose owners, along with government officials, are not above reproach in selling illicit opium and dross. Seizures in the divans since 1929 have amounted to more than 3 per cent of the monopoly opium, and the number of offenses has risen enormously in recent years.

The big story about opium is the story of the illicit trade, and no one who knows it can tell it. The Siamese regard smuggling wholly as a fiscal and police problem, and little consideration is given to its ethical aspects. When seizures amount to no more than 10 per cent of the smuggled opium, it is still regarded as a profitable business. In 1934-35 the largest recorded seizure amounted to 11 per cent, and in 1937 it came to 16 per cent of the illicit trade. As seizures form only a small percentage of the illicit traffic, and as production has doubled in recent years in Yunnan and the Shan States, the prospects of the contraband trade are very bright.

A reliable report in 1934 showed that at least 2,000,000 *tamlung* of opium were then being produced in lands bordering on northern Siam. After deducting the amount used for local consumption, there remained for smuggling purposes—principally into Siam—1,400,000 *tamlung*. The territory under opium production in these areas is not controlled and is rapidly increasing. The local price reductions and the opening of additional licensed shops in the contraband areas have improved *régie* sales, but there is no possible control over smuggling or smoking so long as unlimited production continues to flourish along the frontier. It is estimated that a minimum of a million *tamlung* of opium are smuggled annually into Siam, on which the net profits amount to at least Tcs. 3,000,000; and these profits are further swollen by half a million *tamlung* of illicit dross.

The obvious connection between the steady decline in Government sales and the large growth in the illicit traffic made the smug-

gling issue dominate the Bangkok Opium Conference in 1931. Many felt that the result of this conference were very meagre and its proceedings farcical. It became customary to say that the conference was doing nothing, and that very ineptly. It did, however, succeed in forwarding the registration and rationing policy, in curtailing smoking by minors, and in confining sales to a strictly cash basis. But most of the participating Governments seemed unwilling to forego their huge revenues from opium monopolies, especially during the depression.

The sole result of the conference, as far as Siam was concerned, was an Opium Act passed in March 1934, which redefined dross, raised the minimum age for smokers in public divans, and definitely asserted the right of search and seizure in cases of suspicion. By the following May sales of monopoly opium had fallen off so seriously—they had dropped 40 per cent since 1930—that a special commission was appointed to study further preventive measures. It succeeded in amending the Opium Act in November 1935, but the severer penalties proposed for smuggling were part of the repercussions from the famous opium scandal that broke in October 1935.

In October 1935 a letter was printed in the *Straits Times* from Siam's former financial adviser, James Baxter. It contained a detailed accusation of the Siamese Government's participation in the smuggling of 250,000 *tamlung* of opium across the Burmese frontier, "probably the largest single contraband operation that has ever taken place in the luridly chequered history of opium."

According to this letter, the Government had authorized, in the summer of 1935, the payment of an unusually large reward to so-called informers, which involved doubling the regular budgetary appropriation for such purposes. As financial adviser, Baxter had written the Premier in June, asking that this payment be delayed until an investigation could be made. Four days later, on learning that it had already been paid out, Baxter resigned, though he had only two more months to serve.

The events leading to his resignation were described by Baxter as follows: About May 1934 the director of Siam's excise department had visited the State of Kengtung in Burma, where he was approached by a high personage regarding the Siamese Govern-

ment's possible annual purchase of 400,000 *tamlung* of opium. On his return he reported the offer to the Finance Minister, but was told that the idea must be dropped as contrary to Siam's international agreements. Yet a few days later the excise director received secret information that on August 30 a large quantity of opium was to be smuggled from Kengtung, and he agreed to pay Tcs. 2.50 to the informer if he would conduct officers to the spot. This, however, did not take place until January 1935.

On the 9th of that month, nine lorries—but none of the guilty persons involved—were seized at the market of Menam Sai. Their Siamese drivers claimed that they had been hired, by persons unknown, to deliver equally unknown merchandise to Lampang. Later the affair became further complicated when the claim of a Chinese to some of the reward money was summarily dismissed by the Bangkok courts, despite his promise of further important revelations. At the same time the British consul-general was also informed of the consignment and reported it to the Siamese C.I.D.

While the police inquiry was proceeding, Reeves, the British adviser to the Opium Department, told Baxter that, on learning of the opium's arrival at the capital, he had at once interviewed the excise director, who confessed to him confidentially that he had arranged for the entry of the opium into Siam. Reeves naturally advised confession and the return of the opium to the Burmese Government. The director agreed to let Reeves talk to Baxter about it confidentially, adding that he had also told his story to the Minister of Finance, who later, however, denied that he had heard anything.

Baxter counselled suspending all the officials involved, but no such action was taken. The next move was made by the British Minister, who wrote the Premier asking if the opium was actually for the Government's account and adding that, if so, he would have to call the Burmese Government's attention to the matter. Reeves, on learning of this letter, wrote the excise director that, since the whole story was known to the British Minister, a frank confession would be in order. But still nothing was done. The police inquiry was closed, and the opium remained in the possession of the Excise Department. A reply was sent to the British Minister endorsing the excise director's declaration that the opium

had been seized as contraband and that the reward money, totaling Tcs. 622,262, had been paid to the informers.

In February 1935, a debate took place in the Assembly on the general opium question, but the Government did not then take the opportunity of making any statement regarding the mysterious Kengtung operations. Permission to table the interpolation was refused by 48 votes to 17, and the member asking for it was later the victim of an assault. The barest facts pointed to the complicity of Siamese officials, who made no effort to sift the evidence or to offer any adequate explanation. It was unlikely that any persons would be so foolhardy as to try to smuggle such an immensely valuable consignment unless they were assured of official cooperation, and it was also curious that those responsible ran away without any attempt to salvage so important a prize. Though high officials were by no means free of suspicion, it was probably chiefly the work of third-class functionaries who wanted, in addition to lining their own pockets, to spare their country the expense of buying opium from abroad by so cheap a device as confiscating contraband opium. The complicity of the Government was further indicated by its efforts to hush up the scandal in view of a threatened revolt among some army officers and the imminence of treaty revisions.

All references to this letter were banned from publication, and every effort was made to prevent the circulation of the Malayan and Chinese papers that printed it. Although the Publicity Department regretted the "ugly suggestions" and dwelt on the unselfish patriotism of Siamese civil servants, there was no official comment on the Baxter letter. Some Assembly members found the extra reward money unnecessary and "the whole case rather strange"; but patriotic motives kept them from pressing the Government further.

This scandal did nothing to diminish the smuggling trade in Siam. When 200,000 *tamlung* were seized in 1936, it was rumored in the Assembly that the League was going to impose a huge fine on Siam. This was denied by the Minister of the Interior, who stated that Siam had always lived up to her international agreements, for which she had made important sacrifices in revenue. Though exact figures are unobtainable, it is undoubtedly true that

there were fewer smokers in Siam at this time than in Burma, where registration was in force; nor did opium revenues in Siam represent a fourth of the State's income, as they did in Malaya.

### *Production*

Until 1938 the only opium raised in Siam was illegally cultivated by the mountain tribes, and the Government made no attempt to stop this highly localized industry, since the tribes would certainly have forcibly opposed any such attempt. In the early 1930's the cessation of Indian supplies caused the Opium Department to rely more and more on contraband seizures for its supply of raw opium, but the numerous scandals that occurred as the result of this unavowed policy brought once more to the fore the question of raising enough opium locally to supply the régime's needs. Rumors to this effect were denied as recently as 1936.

In January 1935 the Minister of Finance had turned down a suggestion made in the Assembly that Siam should henceforth buy from Kengtung, and in April 1938 the Government definitely announced that official cultivation of the opium poppy would begin in certain northern *changvads* adjacent to Chiangmai and Chiangrai. A tender for purchasing Persian opium through a Singapore firm was subsequently cancelled; and after an inspection of the fields designated, the policy of growing opium locally was announced on the grounds of greater cheapness and as an effective means of controlling smuggling. Siam was not bound by any of her four international agreements not to grow opium or to refrain from selling it to countries that did not restrict its import.

### *Drugs*

The import and export of narcotic drugs is in the hands of the Public Health Department. Every year its director decides in what quantity drugs are needed for medical and scientific purposes and issues certificates accordingly. The licensed possessor of drugs must submit a monthly report of his disposal of them. No export certificates exist, as there are no legal drug factories in the country.

In 1913 the success of the Arms Act, which restricted contraband in munitions, was responsible for the passing of a similar law that same year dealing with morphine and cocaine. At that time

a big quantity of morphine was being smuggled into Siam every year; and once it was inside the country, it was impossible to check on its distribution. For years this law seemed to control the drug situation, but in 1936 Siam was listed by the League as among the countries suffering from an extension of drug addiction. As in the case of the growth of opium smuggling, this development has been linked to the Chinese situation. Smuggling drugs from abroad into China has been on the decline; but the clandestine manufacture of morphine and heroin—a comparatively recent development—is increasing in a dozen provinces in China, which naturally concerns China's immediate neighbors. During 1936-37 fourteen drugs were sold, of which the most important were 264,180 grams of morphine, 1540.80 grams of cocaine, 14,385.032 grams of medicinal opium, and 687.910 grams of heroin.

In his survey in 1931 Zimmerman included an inventory of the drug situation in Siamese villages. He found that in many cases the poor who could not afford opium chewed *kratom* leaves; but that drug addiction and alcoholic consumption were in any case very low in rural Siam, and drinking was confined to festive occasions. In the central provinces the tradesmen and shopkeeping families spent more money than the peasants on drugs, chiefly *kratom*, which is cheaper and much less harmful than opium. In the south a hundred leaves cost about 5 *satangs*, but the price was twice as high in Bangkok. Regular alcohol and drug addicts were found in the cities among the commercial and laboring classes.

*Kratom* consumption flourishes in peninsular Siam and to a lesser extent in Bangkok. An investigation by the Revenue Department revealed that chewing *kratom* was undoubtedly habit-forming and that its only possible cure was a progressive diminution of the quantity used. *Kratom* permits addicts to endure prolonged fatigue and exposure to gruelling heat, which accounts for its popularity among elephant drivers, collectors of jungle produce, and boatmen. This habit has no unsavory reputation, but women and children are not addicted. Opium smokers find no relief in *kratom* chewing, in spite of its reputation as an opium substitute. Its use is so old that the origin has been forgotten.

Indian hemp, or *ganja*, for long constituted a serious problem in Siam since the effects of addiction to this drug are more serious

than in the case of opium smoking. It is largely used as a cheap flavoring in the curry diet, but its abuse has led to mental aberration and crime. In 1929 the League Commission reported that its consumption was increasing in Siam. Though it fell under the heading of deleterious drugs, its cultivation was still not illegal. At that time, when the area devoted to *ganja* was 688 *rai*, the Government seriously considered forbidding its cultivation. This same question had been studied in 1922 by the Board of Commercial Development, but cultivation was then on such a small scale that the problem appeared unimportant.

It was not until 1930 that the Minister of the Interior tried to forbid the use of *ganja*. Although this attempt failed, the drug was subjected to an internal revenue tax of 10 per cent; and a charge of 7 *satangs* per *rai* was imposed on its cultivation. But later even these imposts were abolished as being too insignificant for enforcement. However, in 1938, when it became apparent that *ganja* was becoming an increasingly prevalent cause of crime and insanity, its cultivation and use were forbidden by law. Out of the 772 inmates of the insane asylum, 149 were *ganja* addicts; and in the Ayuthia gaol, 58 out of 752 prisoners were known to be *ganja* users, while many more escaped detection.

### *Social Aspects of Opium Smoking*

Although there are no accurate statistics regarding the number of smokers in Siam, the League Survey of 1929 estimated from records of public divans that there were 87,825 men and 1,096 women smokers in the country. This total of under 90,000 smokers is certainly the minimum figure; and if smoking is really deleterious, it is hard to see how a comparatively small group can produce revenues that at one time amounted to Tcs. 23,000,000. The Chinese form the great majority of the smokers. There are now about half a million Chinese in Siam, but there were considerably fewer at the time of the League survey. The recent drastic measures to suppress opium addiction in China have apparently had little repercussion in Bangkok.

There is little expression of public opinion on this subject among the Chinese. No evidence was given before the League Commission that a gradual curtailment of opium smoking would



affect the influx of Chinese into the country; but a complete and brusque suppression might temporarily dislocate the labor supply, particularly in the mining regions and among the hill tribes working the forest leases. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce went so far as to state that, although the Chinese community had taken no steps to check opium smoking, such opinion as existed on the subject among the upper stratum was hostile to the habit—but not actively. The general Siamese conviction that where there are Chinese there will be opium is belied by a recent report from the Straits Excise Department that the Chinese there, who have evolved beyond their compatriots in Siam, are tending to replace samshu and opium by beer and cigarettes. Even in the relief of pain, the Chinese are turning more to medicine than to opium.

A similar apathy exists among the Europeans in Siam, as was apparent when the Opium Conference of 1931 was held there. An editorial in the leading English paper put forward the view that the conference was trying to deprive the Chinese coolie of his only means of escape from a hard and dreary world.<sup>1</sup> There even seemed to be a general feeling of relief when the conference failed, though no group wanted to take upon itself the opprobrium of refusing to cooperate with the League. It was clear that almost no one was interested in the conference's supposedly main objective—the suppression of opium smoking. The delegates' only aim was to protect their countries' interests without losing face in the international pageant.

The conference did manage to pass one resolution relating the causes that lead to opium smoking to the living conditions of the classes from which smokers are mainly drawn. But the Siamese Government pointed out that improvements in a people's standard of living are necessarily slow and that it spent more money on public health than it derived from monopoly opium sales. But the Government's procrastination has another cause. Opium smoking is not a Siamese vice; and when its own people are suffering from diseases like malaria and only a third of the nation's children are able to go to school, the Government is not going to spend its money on alien coolies who have voluntarily contracted an ignoble habit. Though the general Siamese attitude towards the Chinese is

callous and indifferent, the Government would not be pleased to see the habit spread among a group that it hopes eventually to absorb. That day, however, is far distant; and in the meantime there are more immediate demands.

There is no record of any systematic effort, official or otherwise, being made to cure addicts. The Red Cross and the missions naturally exert their influence against smoking. In the Catholic church addicts are not allowed to receive the sacrament. An anti-opium clinic was once attempted in Bangkok, but it was closed during the depression. In gaols cures are supposed to take place automatically since addicts are simply deprived of their supplies, but a good deal of smuggling to prisoners takes place. Hospitals treat patients who are addicts, but no attempt is made to get hold of smokers in order to cure them. Smokers in Siam have to pay higher insurance rates, and employers generally exhibit a preference for hiring non-smoking laborers; but these seem to be the only forms of economic discrimination.

Siamese public opinion is certainly against smoking, if not against smuggling. This is just the opposite of the Government's attitude, which is shaped exclusively by considerations of revenue and public order. Until 1938 the Government's policy was that the measures it had taken were sufficient and that any further efforts might attract undesirable attention of a subject better left forgotten.

In September 1938 the opium dens of Bangkok were raided by the police, and 5,223 smokers were arrested. They consisted of 491 Siamese, 3 Indians, 1 Annamite, and 4,728 Chinese. Such as were found to have homes of their own were leniently treated, but those proved to be aliens whose registration papers were not in order were sentenced to deportation. By the end of the month about a thousand of the Chinese had been sent back to southern China, and it was announced that most of those remaining would soon follow. The police even threatened another raid on the seventy remaining divans.

This round-up caused such losses to the licensees of opium dens that some of them were reported to have decided to go out of business and to sell off their stocks. Sales dropped by Tcs. 18,000

in less than a month after the raid took place. This represents the first aggressive step undertaken by the Government against opium smoking, apart from anti-smuggling measures; and it was probably directed more against the Chinese as undesirable aliens than against opium smoking as such.

The customs report for 1938-39 showed a gross revenue from opium of over a million sterling—a slight decrease from the year before, which was officially said to be due to new methods of bookkeeping. In spite of the deportation of numerous clients, sales of *régie* opium showed an increase of nearly 33 per cent, which was attributed not to any increase in the actual quantity of opium consumed or to price changes in the retail sales, but to the substitution of licit for illicit opium. The listed number of smokers entering the licensed establishments was 59,710, of whom 630 were women—a decrease of 3,000 over the previous year. The number of offenses also showed a decrease, which the Government claimed was due to a slight reduction in contraband traffic and above all to a change in the licensing method.

Contracts are no longer given to the highest bidder, but to those contracting to sell most *régie* opium, who are fined for failure to attain the contracted figure. Methods of remunerating licensees were also revised. Heretofore they had received their sole legitimate income in the sale of dross back to the Government. Now they make the major part of their livelihood through profits on sales, and the Government continues to buy back the dross at a reduced rate. Licensees with good records were allowed to retain their establishments, but they could not have been very numerous as out of 102 licenses granted the year before in Bangkok only 47 were renewed.

Progress was also registered in the experimental control of opium-growing among the northern hill tribes. A new section was opened up, and an office of inspection was established at Lam-pang to control production and to encourage tribes to migrate into the experimental area. By this means the administration hopes to suppress the illicit local traffic. At the end of the growing season, of the 12,383 *tamlungs* produced, 2,383 *tamlungs* were retained for consumption by those growers who had been specially licensed,

the rest being purchased by the Government. Siamese opium was six cents per *tamlung* cheaper than the imported variety. With sufficient cooperation from the hill tribes, Siam could soon produce all the opium she needs at a price lower than that paid for imported opium.

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## XXIII · CULTURE

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Perhaps it is the complexity of Siam's cultural history and the scantiness of the materials available that have discouraged popular interest in her archaeological problems. Buddhism encouraged anonymity in art and recognized no merit in preserving ruins. All memory of an individual was burned with his body, and a nameless spire was erected for great heroes. Tropical vegetation, deposits of alluvial soil, heat, humidity, and termite activity have done their share in burying or destroying the past. Siamese buildings have been made of perishable materials, and for years indifferent officials have permitted the destruction of inscriptions and the use of brick from the walls around Thai cities for new construction. The inhabitants of Chiangmai even now have to struggle to preserve their ancient walls intact.

French archaeologists were the first to undertake the work of study and preservation. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Mouhot and Lagrée lost their lives in exploring the Indo-Chinese hinterland, which has always exercised a particular fascination for adventurous Frenchmen; and Lucien Fournereau later did admirable pioneer work on the ruined cities of Sukhothai and Sawanolohe, but his studies were cut short by his premature death. His work was resumed by Aymonier and Pavie, who also carried on exhaustive researches in northeastern Siam, which were supplemented by the studies of inscriptions made by Père Schmitt, Garnier and Delaporte. The reports of Lunet de Lajonquière and Louis Finot, who traveled extensively in Siam, were published in the *Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de l'Indochine*; and their monumental *INVENTAIRE DESCRIPTIF DES MONUMENTS DU CAMBODGE*, published in the *Bulletin of the École Française d'Extrême Orient* (Vol. 17-19), describes the vestiges of Khmer culture that remain in eastern Siam. This work was continued by Major

Seidenfaden and Colonel Gerini. In more recent years central, southern, and western Siam have been studied by such distinguished scholars as Prince Damrong, Georges Coedès, and J. Y. Claeys.

Stone inscriptions showing the variety of civilizations and artistic schools abound in the kingdom. The oldest, a Pali script of the fifth century, was found in southern Siam. The earliest Khmer inscriptions are at Chantabun. Brahmanic remains are very rare because Buddhism triumphed so completely that the earlier religious monuments were abandoned. Buddhist pilgrims delighted to write texts on any and every stone. Most revealing are the autobiographical inscriptions of Ram Gamheng, which Mongkut brought back with him from a provincial tour. A precursor in many fields, Mongkut was the first Siamese to become interested in archaeology. He drew the attention of Europeans as well as of his own people to the study of Khmer inscriptions. In his palace he started a small museum, which lost much of its value by not being made accessible to the public. In 1874 his son created the first public museum in Siam. Old temples were scoured to locate old writings; ancient cities were located and dug out; and provincial governors were encouraged to ship local remains to the Bangkok museum. Prince Damrong struggled in vain against the secret exportation of Siamese *objets d'art*.

But archaeology, whose study does not attract most Siamese, did not receive official approval and support till 1924, when an archaeological service was instituted. Two years later a national museum was founded, which, together with the archaeological service, was amalgamated with the National Library, Beaux Arts, and Literature Departments to form the Royal Institute. Digging in the ruins of Ayuthia has been one of the most successful pieces of work accomplished. But even after the Royal Institute was founded, such interest as then existed was confined to a handful of Siamese noblemen and to the French archaeologists who did the technical work. Yet the peasants have a curious sensitivity about ancient objects. When Maurice Collis was collecting antique porcelain, he asked the villagers from whom he got his specimens how they knew that the pieces were old. They invariably replied, "We felt their power."<sup>1</sup>

*The History of Siamese Art*

Dr. Salmony, curator of the Far Eastern Museum of Cologne, was the first to publish, in 1923, a volume wholly devoted to Siamese sculpture;<sup>2</sup> but the limited material at his disposal led him to certain misconceptions. According to the outstanding authority, Reginald Le May, the Mon occupation of central Siam lasted for at least six centuries.<sup>3</sup> The next influence to which the country was subjected came from the Indianized islands of Java and Sumatra, by way of the Malay Peninsula. The coming of the Khmers to the Menam valley was of supreme artistic importance, as is still shown by its most important center at Lopburi. There the Khmer-inspired ruins show no definite break with the existing forms of that period, but a gradual transition from Mon to Khmer. As the Khmers were violently displaced by the Thais on their southward advance, the formation of a Siamese art form involved a definite break with the Khmer tradition, which survived longest at Lopburi and Utong.

The art of the northern Thai capitals at Sawanolohe and Sukhothai shows the ideals of a race different from the Khmers. The Thais evolved a type specializing in sweeping curves, crescent-shaped brow, thick lips, slightly arched nose, and pointed chin, which is more sensitive and rhythmic than the Khmer type, according to its admirers. The northern Siamese type became a formula, whose repetition was saved from monotony by differences in modeling, casting, and workmanship. The "school" of Sukhothai was the progenitor of other Siamese "schools" of art, notably at Kampan and Pitsanuloke. The Chiengsen art form, whose date of origin is unknown, exercised from the fourteenth century a profound influence over Buddhist sculpture by a marked adherence to the Cinghalese version. Appropriately enough, it was at Ayuthia, until decadence set in at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that all the earlier art forms and currents coalesced. There a national Siamese sculpture was born.

The Khmers worked but little in bronze and lavished their skill principally on sandstone. The Thais did not wholly neglect stone, though it is virtually non-existent in modern Siam; but they preferred bronze. Discontinuance of the use of stone in favor of brick

in religious buildings put an end to general sculpture, but artists continued to model the softer materials of clay and stucco. Stone sculpture has become almost entirely associated with religious images, as even a casual inventory of the innumerable statues of Buddha reveals to the tourist. The Buddhist belief that merit is derived not only from making such a statue but also from buying it and setting it up in some inspiring spot created a steady demand for this form of sculpture.<sup>4</sup> The work is uniform—there are infinite copies of the first crude models, which lay no claim to originality or artistic inspiration. Clay modeling also served secular inspiration, such as patriotic subject matter, which has flourished under the revolution's impetus.

The Siamese have long been skilled in the art of casting bronze in the form of Buddhas, bells, cannons, and dragons. This type of art reached its highest expression in the north, which is rich in beautiful specimens, and became decadent when it was left neglected there by the Siamese as they expanded southwards.

Wood-carving is not a Siamese specialty. In this they are surpassed by the Burmese. Wood was introduced to ornament gable ends, as pillars, and as doorways, when brick and stucco buildings began to replace stone. Gold inlay with lacquer is very effective—if seen from a sufficient distance. Brahmanic and Buddhist mythology has furnished the characters, which alternate with floral designs that are the stylized forms of decoration. The large quantities of gold leaf, which before the depression figured heavily on the list of imports, are used for making merit by application here and there to images of Buddha in the most informal fashion. Mother-of-pearl inlay never reached the artistic level of the Tonkinese product chiefly because the Siamese were too impatient.

The Siamese are expert silversmiths. This is almost the only Siamese art form for which there is a foreign market. The twentieth-century influx of Burmese artists to the court did much to improve Siamese technique, especially in the cutting of gems to adorn silver settings in jewelry. But the most distinctive form of native craft is the *niello* work, or *tompat*, which has been practised in Siam for about eight hundred years. The Government, through the Arts and Crafts School, has helped materially to perfect and to market this product.



About five centuries ago Siamese painting became stylized, and since then there has been no question of originality in the Western sense. The Siamese artist was regarded as a craftsman and was not expected to create even if he should be so talented. Completely bound by rules, he was simply the exponent of a great tradition. A good artist was distinguished from a less able colleague solely by his greater technical ability and the greater pains he took. His use of color was far from subtle, and his sense of perspective and form entirely unnatural. The frescoes on Buddhist temples are testimonials to his skill in wholly conventional outline drawing, and the exclusive subject matter is the life of Buddha and stories from the Ramayana with particular attention to the tortures of the damned. A plentiful application of gold leaf gives them a rich appearance, if not too closely inspected. In the palaces are to be found a few *genre* paintings, with historical scenes or depictions of state ceremonies. The general effect is decorative and represents much labor; but the painting is poor, and the climate in a few decades alters the original effect almost beyond belief.

It is interesting that in southeastern Asia artists and craftsmen were considered among the regular spoils of war. The victors, Napoleon-like, took back with them the cultural heritage of the vanquished. This is the probable explanation of the numerous motifs and designs of foreign origin encountered in Siamese art. Thus Indra is crowned by a typical Siamese *mongkut* and lives in a palace that might have been built in Bangkok. Their art is but another proof of the powers of assimilation of the Siamese. The artist born and trained in the country was usually a craftsman taught by his father, whose skill had caught the attention of his overlord. Compelled to work indefinitely in the patron's household at a nominal wage in return for protection and a bare maintenance, this artist gave no evidence of either resenting or of loving his work. Buddhism, in any case, discouraged the idea of personal fame; and no names of artists working before the founding of Bangkok have survived.

Siam's most famous porcelain is Sawanoloke ware, which is made at Tan Tulieng, three miles upstream from the old capital whose name it bears.<sup>5</sup> Local tradition ascribes the beginning of the porcelain industry to Tulieng, one of the Chinese artists who came

to Siam on the first embassy from the court of Cathay, probably about the eleventh century. His offspring and their disciples carried on less successfully a work that did not cease until the Burmese invasions of 1765-66. The style and glazing were obviously of Chinese inspiration, though the Siamese gradually introduced their own designs. Only lack of the proper sort of clay made the local product, which is bluish gray in color, inferior to the best Chinese pottery. Before this the Thai made only unglazed earthenware, metal vessels, and leaf platters.

Sawanoloke ware was and is still held in the highest esteem. It was supposed to possess antiseptic medicinal virtues that permitted cooked rice to be preserved longer in it than in any other container. To this day the earliest output is eagerly sought after by collectors. So popular was Sawanoloke ware from the outset that the wily Chinese soon began to stock the Siamese market with clever imitations, though probably not on a large scale until after the fall of Ayuthia, when the local kilns had ceased to work. Although the product was inferior, it immortalized the patterns of an art that is now forgotten. In the Bangkok period the Siamese kings became so glutted with imitations of the old and with compromises between Chinese and Siamese traditions that it is impossible to classify porcelain accurately.

Weaving has been a perennial rural occupation even for those of high rank, particularly in the country around Chiangmai and Korat. Indeed, the court costumes used to be hand-woven; gold and silver threads beautifully enriched the colors chosen in accordance with the tradition of a different *panung* for every day in the week. However, the Government's encouragement of the silk industry could not arrest the decline of weaving in the face of the cheaper imported product. Recently an effort was made to stem the tide when the Ministry of Education decreed that the art of weaving must be taught in schools so that the children might learn to make their own clothes as part of their vocational training.

Religious symbolism has a paramount influence on Siamese architecture, as in the case of all the fine arts of Siam. Most forms show Chinese or Indian influence; but some, such as the *kranok* acanthus, are purely Siamese. The ruins of Sukhothai and Lopburi show how Siamese style evolved from the Khmer, though the

materials used were not the same. In northern Siam laterite was abundant and was used in most of Sukhothai's temples. The carvings and frieze ornamentation suffered in central Siam when less durable materials replaced stone. Teak was used in some secular buildings, but the framework of most Siamese dwellings was bamboo.

Although temple-building in Bangkok dates back only to the eighteenth century, about four hundred *wats* now cover one-fifth of the capital's area. Symbolism, as in Gothic cathedrals, was used in evolving the form and number of buildings, even to the arrangement of the columns and stones. When the numbers are not actually specified, there is always a tradition that dominates the style. The royal palace at Bangkok has been called a complete compendium of Siamese architecture. Most of it is easily traceable to Indian or Chinese sources, but some of the ornamentation and many of the fantastic adaptations are indigenous.

If unoriginal, Siamese architecture is at least gay and beautiful. Bangkok's temples are gorgeous and not garish, and perhaps the anonymity of the artists was a factor in permitting them to unleash their imaginations. The roof is the chief glory of Siamese architecture. It dazzles the eye and symbolizes hospitality in a country where prolonged exposure may mean fever and death, and where there is a premium on rest and peace. The jumble of buildings in the *wat*, some dilapidated and some brand new, confuses the Western eye untrained in seeking synthesis or in selection. Inside the buildings there is a weird medley of garish European gifts, ranging from toothbrushes to airplane models, alternating with really beautiful and innumerable images of a complacent or supercilious Buddha.

Elementary as is most Siamese domestic architecture, one can see a fundamental resemblance to the form of certain *wat* buildings. The structure is often teak, if not primitive bamboo; and the roof is of attap palm, or sometimes even corrugated iron or red tiles. Walls are usually flimsy and plentifully pierced with holes. The house is built on tall wooden piles, under which pigs and chickens are wont to congregate. It consists of a high central living room connecting with several tiny bedrooms, which are adorned with a few boxes and chests, a statue of Buddha, and usu-

ally no tables or chairs. A man's rise in the world can usually be told by the number of similar small houses that he has built nearby, either for his retainers or for the horde of relatives who have descended on him. Though such houses are easy to build, house-building is one of the few cooperative activities in rural Siam.

Judging from museum specimens, older domestic architecture revealed an artistic ability and taste that one would not suspect nowadays. The changing social and economic order broke up the wealthy households and put an end to the patronage of artistic talent. European goods, not of the best type, have largely superseded native production; and the resultant hybrid is unattractive. Religious art is still generally conservative and traditional, and the Government has discouraged new temple construction in favor of repairing the old. The king's patronage of traditional architecture has been taken over by the Fine Arts Department, which is trying to revive the arts, raise their standards, and find a regular foreign market for the output.

### *The Siamese Theatre*

Classical drama has taken such root in Siam that it now seems a wholly indigenous institution. Like so much of Siamese culture, it originated in India. A treatise on dramaturgy, supposedly written from divine inspiration in the sixth century by one Bharata, was introduced into Siam at an unknown period to become the Bible of the local drama. The repertoire is not extensive, and new plays are seldom added.

Popular as the drama has always been in Siam, it is curious that there were no permanent theatres until the twentieth century. Spectacles were offered by the king and the nobility at public or private fêtes to celebrate a victory, a marriage, or a birthday, in a specially constructed pavilion. Some ambulatory troupes and a certain amount of amateur entertainment gave the general public opportunities to indulge their passion for such spectacles. Since the theatre replaces reading for the majority of the population, the audience would sit for hours watching the acting of an oft-told tale, usually a Hindu legend unrealistically chanted and danced by a chorus or by individual actors to the accompaniment of an orchestral din. An interminable procession of gorgeously attired

heroes and divinities dance, sing, and mime, before their dazzled eyes. The clowns are the only unconventionalized actors. The stage is marked off from the audience by a few casually placed mats; and the actors dress in full view of the spectators, taking out their belongings and properties from old kerosene tins.

Siamese drama is divided into two major groups: the *khon*, or masked play, and the *lakhon*, in which masks are worn only when animals or strange beings are represented. Although nature is theoretically the inspiration for these traditional masks, it takes a people like the Siamese, already acquainted with the plot and gifted with a fertile imagination, to know what the masks denote. The *khon*, as the ancient classical drama, was originally presented on certain religious or state occasions in the form of pageants. Within recent years it has lost its religious character and has become merely an amusement; but it is too expensive to be frequently seen. Women rarely took part in the *khon*, and the actors who impersonated female roles were the only ones not to wear masks. The amount of graceful posturing required long technical training, but the characteristic of the *khon* was strenuous action. The lines were recited off-stage to the accompaniment of miming on the stage. In recent years singing has been introduced. The language used is Siamese, but the subject matter is from the Ramayana.

The *lakhon* differs from the *khon* in that it specializes in grace of action; its themes are not confined to the Ramayana; and the lines are usually sung. The *lakhon* is classified according to whether it is played inside or outside the royal palace, and whether in the royal or the popular theatre. The inside royal *lakhon* is played exclusively by women for the pleasure of the Court; and the three types of plays so presented treat of the Ramayana or Vishnupurana, or of the Javanese history of Inao. The popular *lakhon* is played by professional male actors, and the subject matter is varied. Not until the time of Mongkut were women allowed to play in the popular theatre, and then not on the stage at the same time as men.

The *lakhon* is based partly on temple dances in the Khmer tradition, and partly on mimed scenes taken from the Ramayana.<sup>6</sup> The word origin of *lakhon* denotes that it was brought to Ayuthia from the southern provinces, whither it came directly from

India or Java, and where it is still most firmly rooted. The twelve classic attitudes, in which actors must pass an examination, are clearly Indian. Musical themes indicate certain conventionalized postures.

In the old days there were ambulatory troupes of *lakhon* players who would arrive in a village, Indian-file, escorted by all the children. Although the costumes and gestures were immutably fixed by tradition, the very fact of this drama being ambulatory necessitated a certain simplicity. But where it was a regular institution, the dramatic type tended to become more and more complicated.

Sacred dances made up the two forms of temple drama. In the Brahmanic temples two gestures of adoration and offering, interminably repeated to the accompaniment of recitations from the Ramayana, formed part of the cult to Siva and Krishnu. In Buddhist temples the Jatakas retraced the multiple lives of Buddha; but because that religion frowned upon the theatre, this form of drama fell into the hands of laymen, who gradually popularized it, though it never wholly lost its sacred character. Even the popular theatre has a mildly Buddhist flavor; but the Brahmanic theatre is wholly sacred and the royal theatre has its own official performers.

The *yiké* is still another form of drama, or rather farce, acted entirely by men until very recent years, in which the spicy dialogue has a distinctly burlesque character. In the *yiké* the standards of original acting are higher, but the grace and elegance of language that characterize the *lakhon* are conspicuously absent.

The most fascinating form of Siamese theatre is the popular *nang talung*, or shadow play, which probably dates from the Ayutthian period. The words *nang talung*, which mean "the leather of Patalung," denote the southern, probably Malayan-Javanese, origin of these pseudo-marionettes. Very elaborately wrought and colored leather figures are projected against a sheet to portray ancient dramas, to the accompaniment of recitations and music. Like all Siamese drama, *nang talung* has a religious cast; it was devised originally as a magical means of protection against evil spirits and was closely connected with ancestor worship.<sup>7</sup> A puppet representing a hostile spirit is never used without the precaution of a charm; and

the figures of Vishnu, Siva, and Rishi are the object of a special cult. Stories from the Ramayana have been superimposed on the original Indonesian tales, with an infinite variety of complicated groupings and scenery. Dancers carry the figures on poles, executing steps in the choreographic tradition of the *khon*. Repetition of the chanting, to the accompaniment of an orchestra placed on both sides of the screen, enables the actors to keep up with the narrative.

Unfortunately the *nang talung* is dying out. In the last years of the absolute monarchy there was still an aged functionary who taught the technique of this art, but its total disappearance is now imminent. Modern Siamese find the operetta or cinema more to their taste. It is significant that the word for the leather puppets, *nang*, is now used to denote the films.

The Siamese love for any form of distraction, ranging from cock and fish fights to curious and beautiful dramatic spectacles, has made them welcome the European drama. Moreover, it is so much more in harmony with the new concepts of time and space that it is rapidly displacing the traditional dramatic forms. Rama VI, by his active interest both as translator and as actor in such spectacles, shocked many conservative Siamese; but he did much to guide popular taste in his selection and interpretation of Western ideas of drama.

Students returning from abroad began to act so successfully in amateur performances that the idea of adapting the *lakhon poot*, or foreign spoken play, to Siamese audiences began to attract professionals. The new vogue became so great among the upper classes in Bangkok that a special theatre was built for such performances. In fact the whole movement evolved away from the king's original intention of using this form of drama, in conformity with his missionary tastes, to guide and instruct his people. He therefore turned to a revival of the classical Siamese drama.

Under the constitutional régime, the Department of Fine Arts has devoted itself to reviving historical plays, especially dramas of the Burmese wars, which serve admirably as preparedness propaganda. Their tempo has been speeded up, and dialogue has been introduced to replace the most prolonged posturing. Although there is a more definite and logical plot than in the traditional spec-

tacles, there is still a good deal of lingering over sentimental and gory incidents. Like the music that accompanies them, they are a curious hybrid of Siamese and Western. Although Siamese drama has never excluded women, as in most oriental countries, tradition is still strong enough to require actresses to assume men's roles.

These plays have had a great success in Bangkok, and one of them was filmed so that it might reach a wider provincial audience. At the end of its first year of dramatic presentation in 1936-37, the Fine Arts Department netted a profit of Tcs. 20,000, on the strength of which it requested a larger budgetary appropriation with which to build a real theatre. Unfortunately the project of its director, Luang Vichitr, for a national theatre has been dropped. Unlike the old princes, the new government leaders have little money to spare on the purely cultural.

Besides Luang Vichitr, the only other Siamese creator of modern drama is a royal prince who writes under the pseudonym of Prem Chaya. His third play, *Magic Lotus*, written in 1937, was an adaptation for the English stage of a fifteenth century Siamese classic. It was broadcast over a London radio network in March 1938 and was staged in Yorkshire a month later. The plot follows the traditional Siamese pattern, in which domestic jealousy is virtually the sole theme. It is significant that there are no tragedies in Siamese literature and that all problems are solved by the timely intervention of the supernatural.

### *The Cinema*

The popularity of the cinema is great in Siam. Moving-picture halls have sprung up in almost every town and village, under Chinese management for the most part. Most of the films shown are Hollywood products. In some cases their presentation is confined to the week-end, and Chinese films are shown in the middle of the week.

A few Siamese companies make films, which are slowly gaining in popularity. In 1922 the Srikrung Film Company started production; and in 1927 two more Siamese companies, the Bangkok Pictures Company and the Borisab Tai Papayon Thai Company, and two Chinese companies were founded. In 1936 a new com-



pany, the Siam Motion Picture Corporation, with a capital of Tcs. 160,000, was set up, the chief shareholder being a nephew of Prajadhipok.

A Cinema Law of September 1930 instituted a censorship of films by the Ministry of the Interior for the preservation of public order and morals, but it was very sparingly used. In 1931, out of fifty-seven pictures reviewed, only four were censored; and these were scenes from Chinese pictures showing cruelty to humans or animals.

### *Siamese Music*

The Siamese, like the Burmese, are very musical; and their instruments have a common Indian origin. Almost every adult Siamese can play at least one instrument—string, wind, or percussion—and women usually specialize in the strings.

Siamese music can be traced back to the Sukhothai period when the Thais began to evolve their own art from an Indian basis, as evidenced and symbolized by the prominent part assigned to one instrument, the *ranad*.<sup>8</sup> As instruments were later developed to accompany singing, their evolution was incidental to the vocal and dramatic arts. Moreover, the Siamese of olden times attached more importance to the words than to the air and would never sacrifice pure pronunciation to musical effect. In the north serenades are still very popular, with a subject matter ranging from heroic exploits and ballads to the inevitable love themes.

A practical problem that arose in connection with the wind instrument accompaniments of the serenade was solved by the Ayuthian Siamese by playing the melodies between the words. Since poets and musicians composed separately and without copyright, melodies were used freely to accompany any verses. The number of these melodies composed by unknown musicians in the course of the last five hundred years is about 1,200; and they are divided into thirty-six groups, each with its special function. One set of thirteen melodies expresses anger; another of twenty-one, sorrow; two groups of four each express joy and excitement; and another set of seven embodies the Buddhist ideal of contemplation. The numerical superiority of the sorrowful group explains the impression that most Westerners have that all Siamese music is

plaintive and in minor key. Harmony is almost non-existent, but simple variations are obtained by the use of counterpoint.<sup>9</sup> Orchestral music is always played in unison.

The task of training musicians, which was formerly undertaken by the guilds, in time devolved upon the theatre. Strolling players are now the only survivors of the independent troupes of actor-singers who formerly flourished under the patronage of certain Siamese aristocrats. Professional musicians are still in steady and widespread demand since music accompanies every domestic or religious ceremony. Considerable technical skill has been achieved as the result of the rigorous training in the correct gestures and deportment that accompany the songs, which, since they are never written down, have to be learned by ear.

The indiscriminate use of any melody to accompany any song in any play did not cease until almost half a century ago, when Prince Nara, himself an accomplished musician, introduced Western operatic ideas into Siam and composed songs with words specifically written for them; this innovation, called the *Lakorn Duk Damban*, gained great popularity. Two other royal princes, Varnvaidya and Bidya, have also done much through their own compositions for the development of modern Siamese music. Prince Damrong was the principal sponsor of the conservation of Siamese music, which was being precariously kept alive solely by oral tradition. More than twenty-five years ago the first attempt was made to write it down, but the difference between the two scales made it impossible to transcribe Siamese accurately by means of the European notation.

As early as Chulalongkorn's reign singing in the Western manner was taught in Siamese schools, and military bands in Bangkok were engaged in playing Siamese music in the martial manner of the Occident. The resultant mélange was so unsatisfactory that in 1930 Prince Damrong took steps to have Siamese music preserved in its original form through phonograph records. Although the original idea was to make Siamese music available to all nationalities, or at least to approximate the original closely enough for purposes of general appreciation, only two sets of these records are in existence.

The only printed work on the subject is that of Professor

Stumpf of Berlin University, who, on the occasion of the European tour of a Siamese theatrical company in 1900, took down their music, studied their instruments, and had long conversations with the musicians. The results of his enquiries were published under the title *Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen* (Leipzig, 1901). A more complete attempt was begun in 1932 by another specialist in Javanese music, Paul Seelig. In 1936 a committee of the Fine Arts Department was officially appointed to write down Siamese music in European notation and to ascertain what Western instruments are the most suitable for its reproduction. Unfortunately the orchestra of the Fine Arts Department, which has been working for many years, has won little popular support.

Much more popular is the new vocal music recently introduced by Luang Vichitr and written for his historical plays. These new songs have gained such popularity as to justify the prophecy that they may become the basis of a new national musical art.

### *The Siamese Language*

The first Siamese script was developed during the reign of the great king Ram Gamheng. It was probably the work of his gifted and scholarly Sangharaja from Ligor, who knew the *Tripitaka* from beginning to end and was learned above all others in the realm.<sup>10</sup> In general it is believed that Siamese writing was taken almost bodily from the Khmer script, whose ultimate source was Indian. Even during the brief supremacy of the Sukhothai dynasty the letters underwent considerable change, but in its present form modern Siamese writing is clearly derived from this Sukhothai script. There is no record of any writing for two centuries after the end of the Sukhothai period.

As in medieval Europe, such learning as existed throughout Siam was conserved in the monasteries. Religious works were written on corypha palm leaves, whose edges were gilded or touched with vermillion. Formerly each temple had a grove of corypha trees for this purpose; but as time went on, peasants brought the leaves to the monastery as a means of making merit. These palm leaves are placed in order on strings and folded like a fan.

The preparation and copying of these sacred books has been

considered so meritorious that even those who are hired as copyists derive spiritual credit. Many of the noble ladies of Siam, few of them knowing what they wrote, spent much of their time in this blind devotion of copying, which made it possible for the monasteries to resist the introduction of printing for years. The most elegant of these sacred books were engraved on ivory tablets, the material used being an indication of the value of the work. In the same way the king's letters were engraved on sheets of gold when they were sent to princes of exalted rank. They were never signed since the king's monopoly of gold was a guarantee of the letter's authenticity. To lesser lights he wrote on paper, either black or white, and attached his seal. There is no doubt that the materials thus used affected the form in which Siamese letters evolved.

The written Siamese language has forty-four consonants, thirty-two vowels, a host of accents, and no punctuation. The words are not separated from each other, and the stream of characters flows on uninterruptedly until the idea changes. Juxtaposition is the only means of indicating syntactical relations between words. In Siamese speech there is no tone of finality or of interrogation such as Europeans are accustomed to, but simply a droll breaking-off in mid-air. Nouns have their special numerals, and it is very bad taste to apply the numeral reserved for coolies to monks. These variations, based on a rigid social hierarchy, are very confusing. There is no such thing as a possessive adjective, and the words for "you" and "me" differ according to the myriad possible relationships between the persons conversing. Differences are so finely noted that a royal rank changes according to whether or not the title is hereditary.

The language is rich and even poetic. Since water dominates Siamese life, tears are "the water of the eyes"; honey is "the water of bees"; sugar, "the water of the palm"; will-power, "the water of the heart." The humor of everyday observation is also crystallized in current expressions. The tail of a tiger is the "rudder"; a general is the "mother of his army"; a wig is "hypocrite hair"; whiskey is "sin-water"; and an angel is "God's boy."

The most curious aspect of the language is its tendency to analyze and break up everything into its component parts, rather

than to synthesize or evolve general ideas. A series of words are used to indicate what in European languages is expressed by a single verb. The Siamese language shows the great weakness of being concerned with, and itemizing, the external, rather than evaluating the whole. A lack of precision, common to many Asiatic languages, has been the paradoxical outcome.

The Thai language is still spoken with only slight variations in different regions throughout the Indo-Chinese peninsula; and such dialectical differences as have survived, as between Siamese and Lao, are giving way before the increased means of communication. The early language of the Thai-Sians was probably polysyllabic, but gradually the sounds were reduced to monosyllables with gradations of tones employed to denote shades of meaning. While there are no grammatical inflections, each of the 1,851 monosyllables have five tones. As a result of this paucity of words, the Siamese language has to be enriched by compounding and borrowing words from foreign sources. Although the language that the primitive Thais brought from inner Asia was modified by Chinese contacts, its expansion dates from the Khmer conquest. The Thai language survived as a separate speech, but it emerged profoundly modified by the Sanskrit and Pali terminology of the Khmers. Frankfurter's *Elements of Grammar* embodied the first serious attempt made to list the words borrowed from the Cambodian. The most recent of McFarland's Siamese-English dictionaries lists 1,362 Pali and Sanskrit words, as compared with 32 pure Cambodian.

Although it is generally accepted that Pali and Sanskrit words are used to denote abstract ideas, or in connection with exalted personages, quite a few derivatives have filtered into the everyday vocabulary of the Siamese. Pali and Sanskrit established an international medium of communication between all countries of Buddhist and Indian culture, but they also erected a class barrier within Siam itself. The highly cultured Siamese borrowed so extensively from Sanskrit and Pali that their speech was unintelligible to the Siamese peasant. Thus two quite different languages grew up, one for the common people, and the other for the Court.

Apparently the Thai-Khmer language was adequate until trade

began to develop in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, bringing with it new objects and foreign ideas. Chinese, Paguan, Malay, and Javanese words were incorporated into the language at this time. But European contacts were by far the most enriching to the language.

The printing press, which was introduced into Siam in the early nineteenth century by the missionaries, soon became—with the typewriter—a potent factor in transforming the language and making its literature available to everyone. An important result of the use of the printing press was the introduction of spacing between words. Similarly, Siamese letter forms were affected by the first Siamese typewriter, which was introduced in 1891.

In the early days, when foreign advisers flourished and returned students wanted to display their superior knowledge of things Western, European words and phrases were incorporated wholesale into the language. But under the nationalistic Rama VI a deliberate effort was made to curtail this slavish imitation and to encourage an orderly evolution within the Siamese language. Pali and Siamese words were compounded to denote new objects. Thus thoralok, a combination of *thora*, Pali for “distant,” and *lok*, Siamese for “writing,” became the new word for “telegraph.” As the Siamese language depends on word order and not word ending, more and more Pali terminations have been introduced to denote shades of meaning. Other combinations, such as “heaven-fire” for electricity, have sprung from popular usage and have been incorporated into the language along with foreign technical expressions that have been bodily transplanted.

The Siamese language, which for the peasant consisted of only a few hundred words and for the educated nobleman of only a few thousand, soon began to expand by leaps and bounds. It used to be said that every day a new word was born. Translators had to keep revising their work to keep abreast of the rapid changes. It became apparent that more dictionaries were needed to keep the public informed about the new words, which were too often introduced without proper explanation. Even in the decade following the publication of the government dictionary in 1928, the number of words has almost doubled. Although the words in

everyday use are still very limited—Dr. McFarland has calculated that one thousand words recur about 95 per cent of the time—the total number of words is now about 40,000.

### *Siamese Literature*

When European contacts made the Siamese upper classes for the first time consciously interested in their cultural past, various attempts were made to take stock of their literary heritage. The most important first step was the institution by Mongkut's children of a national library, the Vajiranana, on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chakri dynasty.

Of the scanty remnants that survived the Ayuthian holocausts, the vast majority are religious. Buddhist ideals dominate the whole poetic and dramatic concept. The earliest Thai writing is purely religious, and for the most part in Pali. When it was translated, it was written in Cambodian script; thus many of the supposedly Khmer manuscripts actually originated in Siam. Although the Siamese modified Cambodian writing in order to transcribe their vernacular speech, they preserved it intact for copying Pali texts.<sup>21</sup>

Siam has her own life of Buddha with its mass of related legends, the *Pathomma Somphotiyan*, which Alabaster translated into English. The earliest manuscript in Siam is the *Traibhummekatha*, a treatise on Buddhist cosmogony composed by the son of Ram Gamheng. There were many Siamese writers on Buddhism, especially during the period of literary activity in Chiangmai in the sixteenth century; but there are almost no translations from the *Tripitaka* extant. The *Vinayapitaka* was translated for the practical reason that it embodied the regulations by which the clergy were to live. Parts of the *Jataka* are well known through translations, but the *Jataka* as a whole had never been translated until Chulalongkorn decided to undertake the task in 1904. This work took years to accomplish; it finally appeared in twenty-two instalments, for which the king himself wrote the preface. In this he attempted to reconcile the sacred scriptures with scientific criticism and to evaluate the position of the *Jataka* in Siamese literature. His work was analogous to the translation of the *Mangalataka-Dispami*, which was undertaken in 1824 by Rama III. Within the last few years there have been similar attempts, chiefly on the part

of pious and learned individuals, to make more of the Buddhist texts available to the public so as to stem the tide of European materialism. Although the Buddhist Canons have had an influence on Siamese literature, it has been appreciated only by the cultured few who read Pali. It was never thought necessary to make the sacred texts available to the masses through translation. The spiritual democracy of Buddhism was never a democracy of culture, even though the latter was largely religious in inspiration.

Buddhist ethical literature is a motley collection of traditions, rules for the conduct of kings, and above all, maxims, of which the best are attributed to Phra Ruang. The *Klong Loka Niti*, edited by Prince Damrong, a collection of Siamese wise sayings dating back to the Ayuthian period, has gone through many editions, of which one is now used as a school text. Although the Siamese language is rich in proverbial expressions, no one before Pallegoix attempted to make a special study of these sayings, or even to list them.<sup>12</sup> In their terseness, shrewdness, and caustic wit, these maxims show a remarkable knowledge of human nature. There is nothing sublime or exalted about them; they are inspired chiefly by common sense and the desire not to be outwitted or made ridiculous.

### Poetry

Poetry is the most natural form of Siamese secular expression and is by no means confined to the intelligentsia. The illiterate peasant has a natural aptitude for poetical expression and appreciation.<sup>13</sup> Groups of rural rhymesters will sing extemporized songs well into the early hours of the morning. This type of poetry develops a ready repartee, usually between the two sexes, in which the alternation of witty vulgarity and graceful compliments delights the listening crowd. Any subject, even the cooperative credit movement, is considered appropriate material.

Scholarship has never been an essential attribute of Siamese poetry, and even cultured poets took little trouble to polish their style; they were more interested in poetic energy than in art, and their works now seem crude. Few Europeans and only slightly more Siamese can distinguish between the different forms of *chand*, *glon*, *klon*, and *ray*. The *chand* closely follows its Indian



origin without much regard for meter. Rhyming was introduced into the *chand* probably to take the place of rhythm, as the Siamese language does not lend itself to meter.

The oldest *chand* poems extant today date from the Ayuthian period, when the most active poets were the kings. In the fifteenth century King Trailok was the author of a celebrated and fascinating romance in verse, the *Phra Law. Yuen Pai*, an anonymous historical poem of this period celebrating Trailok's victory over the Prince of Chiangmai, is also regarded as a masterpiece. The destruction of Ayuthia was a great loss to Siamese literature since many manuscripts were burned along with the official records and annals of its kings.

The reign of Phra Narai was particularly productive in the artistic field and was especially rich in poetry. The king himself was an accomplished exponent, but the most famous poet of the period was Sri Praj, whose father, Phra Maharajagru, was also a poet and political philosopher. The best of Sri Praj's voluminous works are *Khleng Kamruen* and the story of *Anirudh*. Early in the following century a great poet-prince, Chao Phya Dharmadhibes, took the ancient Javanese story of Inao and made of it one of the most important contributions to Siamese poetic literature. Two royal princesses of this period wrote two versions of this same tale in dramatic form, *Inao Yai* and *Inao Lak*, of which the latter has always been the most popular and is regarded as the best Siamese drama.

The great source of poetry and drama is the *Ramakien*, a Siamese version of the Indian Ramayana. Most Siamese works bear the imprint of its heroic and romantic figures, which are reminiscent of the *chansons de geste*. However, in the early nineteenth century, the outstanding Siamese poet and moralist, Sundara Bhu, made himself master of a distinctively Siamese type of poetry, in which he has never been equalled. Moreover, the anonymous author of the great work *Jan Khun Phen* depicted the real life of his day without recourse to Indian mythology or heroics. In recent years the kings and royal princes have been remarkable both as writers and as collectors of literature. Today Prince Bidyalkarana is the outstanding poet, as well as the chief authority on Siamese poetry and music.

Apart from religious works, there are virtually no Siamese prose classics. A few works on military tactics and medicine and some unreliable chronicles have survived, but the essay form was apparently unknown until Rama VI developed propaganda prose. Of the slightly more numerous original dramas, one may cite two tales of Ayuthian history, *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* and *Krai Thong*, of which the former is by far the more important owing to its realistic reflections on contemporary life. Legal literature is far richer. There are also the masterly royal proclamations and letters of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, which are considered by authorities to have formed modern Siamese prose style.

Indigenous literature, however, forms but a small part of the literary heritage of modern Siam. The *Ramayana* and *Inao* are two of the most important borrowings from foreign sources and have formed the Siamese taste for fairy tales and for the miraculous generally. In the eighteenth century there was an active literary movement, which was chiefly marked by translations. *The Conversations of Nang Tantrai*<sup>14</sup> are a kind of Siamese Scheherezade, whose different versions were probably assembled by various Siamese authors from the Pali texts.

Of Brahmanic inspiration are the Lao tales, translated by Pavie,<sup>15</sup> in which Buddhist concepts are grafted onto the Vedic. The eminent Oriental scholar, Bastien, called attention many years ago to the Indian origin of the Siamese collection of tales called the *Book of the Birds*, of which both a prose and a poetic version exist. The reverence in which the Siamese hold all white animals, and especially the white elephant, is also Vedic in origin. In the Bangkok period Chinese influence made itself felt, and a Siamese version of the Chinese romance of the *Three Kingdoms* became so popular that by the end of Rama VI's reign thirty-four Chinese novels had been translated into Siamese. Both Chinese and Indian influences have now been superseded by European.

Although in all these adaptations magic and the supernatural play an important role, the stories betray a truly Siamese sense of humor; and the drama, in which innocent and foolish people are invariably deceived by clever ruses, shows a very realistic and human attitude towards social problems. A Siamese always must go forth to seek a counsellor who will expound to him the pitfalls

that he is likely to encounter on his way through life.<sup>10</sup> In the stress of dire circumstances he must never lose self-control or abandon reason. The loss of these will make him seriously ill, and joy and pleasure are the only weapons with which to drive disease away.

### *Contemporary Literature*

In the early modern period, Siamese government documents, such as the *Official Gazette* and departmental reports, were about the only literary output. In addition to his work on the *Tripitaka* and his activities in connection with the founding of the National Library, Chulalongkorn instituted the Royal Historical Research Association in 1907 to collect and print copies of foreign and domestic documents showing Siam's relations with the outside world. The first work accomplished was a commentary by the king on an old diary kept by a royal princess, and this was followed later by the publication of his own letters from Europe to his daughter in Siam. About fifty books have been published by the National Library in Siamese and in English.

Official and private enterprise have cooperated admirably in the task of making accessible to Siamese the written cultural heritage of the world. The National Library has an invaluable collection of Siamese manuscripts, and the law requiring that it should receive two copies of everything printed in the kingdom has provided it with a total of over 25,000 volumes. Its European collection is one of the best in the Far East.

Rama VI carried out his father's original intention of expanding the Royal Historical Research Society to include general literature, by instituting a Literary Society of Siam. He realized that literary progress in Siam had been retarded because the writers, who were almost all princes with official duties, wrote as a hobby and without the necessary incentive to work professionally. Through his encouragement and by his own example, he was the pioneer of contemporary literary output in Siam.

The special circumstances under which his reign began turned Rama VI away from political democracy, for which he had conceived a great admiration in the course of his English education,

and back to his first love—literature. His political essays were brilliant; he was the first Siamese poet to write a military and a financial treatise, and the first Siamese historian to translate Shakespeare. He also wrote stories of the Munchausen type, a legal essay on marriage, and a series of essays “to educate and elevate the national mind.” His example showed the Siamese that good literature could be written without recourse to emotionalism, and it had an excellent effect in guiding Siamese writers away from excessive sentimentality. It was not by chance that vernacular journalism was born in his reign.

In the field of history the king's admirable example was not so successful. Like many Siamese princes whose interests have drawn them to the study of history, Rama VI selected European subject matter. The writing of history has always been considered a royal prerogative in Siam. The first attempt to write an unprejudiced and scientifically critical history of the country was a three-volume work by Prince Bhanurangsi. Written in Siamese, with a preface by Prince Damrong, it is known as the edition of King Mongkut. Prince Damrong has done more work than any other Siamese on the history and culture of his country. But the only biography in existence in Siam is a short sketch of Mongkut, and the reverential attitude towards superiors that still characterizes the Siamese has prevented any really critical study of any of their great men. Such accounts as exist are invariably laudatory since they identify illustrious personages with their country.

The Siamese have developed no taste for reading biography, and research has revealed the existence of only one autobiography—*Lakon Nang Cheewit* (The Theatre of Life), the story of a young woman who gave up her lover for the sake of his career. This *lacuna* is due partly to Buddhism's encouragement of impersonality in art, and partly to the Siamese dislike of self-revelation. There is no general interest in history, archaeology, or ethnology. The two outstanding exceptions are *Chankat Balankura*, an interpretation of the Siamese mind in the light of European philosophy, and *Samaj Burawas*, the philosophy of Buddhism in the light of modern science. As a rule Siamese scholars are not interested in the background study required for comparative methods, and the

use of such methods is discouraged by a nationalistic bias in favor of everything Siamese. Such an attitude is not conducive to critical research into either the secrets of the heart or the history of nations.

Although the advent of the new régime has meant a marked decline in the output of governmental reports and in the study of foreign languages, it has nurtured a study of Siamese itself and of any native product—literary, artistic, or musical—that has a patriotic tinge. School curricula have been adjusted to raise the standards of Siamese language study, which the numerous failures in the government examinations showed to be shockingly low.<sup>17</sup>

The most promising developments are the rapid growth of the vernacular press and the very limited and recent experiments with the novel form. Most persons, even cultured Siamese and foreigners long familiar with the country, declare that Siamese novels are all licentious and trashy. It is true that detective stories on the Edgar Wallace and Conan Doyle models and paper-backed novels of the most lurid type have had a tremendous and long-standing sale, but very recently the psychological and social novel has begun to appear. The outstanding writer in this field is a young woman, Doka Mai Sota, whose work gives distinct promise in spite of its conventionally moral outlook.

Works of pure imagination are very scarce in modern Siam. A survey of the current cultural scene confirms Sir Josiah Crosby's criticism that to match the remarkable material advance a cultural revival in Siam is overdue.<sup>18</sup> Though the old aristocratic culture has been dislocated by the revolution, there are no signs of promising creative vitality in the schools of Siam. Young men are specializing in some branch of science that has an immediate and practical value; and the arts are being left to the women, who in turn regard their study simply as a prerequisite to the teaching profession rather than as an end in itself. The Government can give prizes, hold exhibits, and launch magazines for the Fine Arts Department; but it cannot artificially stimulate the creative imagination. Luang Vichitr, the most prolific artist in Siam today, is no exception. In three years, from 1928–1931, he wrote twenty-one books on psychology and religion; and his reading public, estimated at 5,000, brought him in a goodly sum. When made head

of the Fine Arts Department, he turned out plays and music with equal speed and success. But he is facile rather than creative. Current materialism in Siam is stealing a page out of Europe's book and is a denial of the Oriental ideal of "the preeminence of things of the spirit."

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## XXIV · EDUCATION

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Education in old Siam was divided into four periods. The first, from birth to the age of three, was called "in-arms"; the second, from four to seven, was the "to-be-led-along" stage; the third, the "may-run-about" period, lasted for boys from the ages of eight to thirteen, but two years less for girls; and the fourth period was marked for boys by the cutting of the topknot, an important ceremony attended by rites, but had no analogous importance for girls. In the third period boys were educated by their fathers or were sent to the *wat*, which was then the only school of the humanities, while girls remained at home to be taught housekeeping by their mothers.

From the viewpoint of formal education, the monastic period was the only one that could be seriously counted, although attendance was irregular, accommodation sketchy, and the curriculum primitive. At the age of eight boys were generally sent to act as attendants on a particular monk, usually a relative or a friend of the family, in return for which they received a share of the monk's food and a reading knowledge of the elements of Buddhism. *Wat* education was primarily a preparation for the priesthood and only very secondarily a training for life in this world. It was, nevertheless, held in the highest veneration even by the Laos; and the fact that a man had received a *wat* education was shown by a prefix to his name. Those who had never had this opportunity were called "green men," no matter how much education they might later receive elsewhere.

Foreign missionaries were the pioneers of secular education in Siam, but the suspicion with which they were regarded by Nang Klao hindered their work. Under Mongkut, who was himself indebted to mission learning, they acquired scope. But it was in the field of female education that mission efforts at this period made the most radical headway. Girls' education until then had

been confined to lessons in cooking, rolling tobacco and betel leaves, and sewing. Lower-class girls fetched wood, picked vegetables and fruit, and were generally the real workers of the country, both in the field and in the shop. The only education they received was a training in the homes of their patrons. La Loubère found that the women of the aristocracy, who went out little though confined by no purdah restrictions, gloried in, rather than resented, their narrow lives, thinking it shameful and vulgar to enjoy the greater freedom of the low-born.<sup>1</sup>

The first serious official effort to assume responsibility for national education dated from Prince Damrong's study-tour in Europe. On his return in 1892 an Education Department was formed with the aid of Robert Morant, Mrs. Leonowens' successor as tutor to the royal children. Together they drew up a national program and engaged a large staff of men and women teachers from England. Their main concern was the development of primary education, for which Siamese was chosen as the language vehicle. Textbooks with which to supplant the Oriental system of rote learning were compiled by Damrong and Morant. Secondary education was divided into two branches: one section to be given in English, a five years' course as a preliminary to technical or vocational training; and the other in Siamese as a preparation for the ordinary business of life. Government examinations and certificates were projected, which were eventually to include the *wat* schools. A normal training course was to be established to raise the low standard of teaching; and a special secondary school—the Rajakumara College—was to be set up in the palace for royal and noble children under Morant's special direction.

It was years before this scheme was seriously applied; and in the meantime, as a result of incompetence and corruption in the Education Department, the whole system lapsed into chaos. At the close of the century another Englishman, W. G. Johnson, was given the task of reorganization; but he was seriously handicapped by lack of money. The sums spent on education were ridiculously small when compared with other expenditures. Even after the education allotment had increased threefold between the years 1899 and 1901, it still amounted to no more than 2.5 per cent of the total expenditures. The normal school, which had been opened



in 1892, offered little inducement to following a profession that was underpaid and held in almost no respect; and for the first years scholarships had to be given to persuade any students at all to enter. Even the most enlightened among the Siamese ruling class were practical, self-taught men, who placed little value on book-learning.

Needless to say, this attitude was shared by the students. They lacked ambition, perseverance, and group spirit. But there was no disciplinary problem. The respect for authority with which every Siamese child was imbued replaced "the keener sense of truth and industry that is found in European children," as one of their teachers delicately put it.<sup>2</sup> There was no question of corporal punishment or even of harsh words since discipline and courtesy were automatic. But in turn the instructor had to be careful not to wound his students' pride. One tactless teacher habitually reduced his class to tears by dilating on the historical insignificance of their country, which, they had fondly believed, held a very important position in the world.<sup>3</sup> Since inquisitiveness was politeness, it was *de rigueur* to question a teacher as to the price of his watch and the date of his last haircut. Though students did not like long holidays, they would absent themselves whenever they felt so inclined and were always prone to be unpunctual.

Endowed with retentive memories, Siamese students found it easy to learn whole pages by heart but difficult to recount in their own words what they had learnt. Manual labor was held in the greatest aversion, and an effort was made to offset this by technical and industrial schools. The curriculum for primary, or *Prathom*, education was devoted chiefly to the study of the Siamese language, history, and geography, with the balance of its twenty-five hours weekly study apportioned between ethics, arithmetic, hygiene, drawing, scout training, and vocational preparation. Secondary or *Matayom*, education continued these subjects, foreign languages largely replacing Siamese, and despite the lack of equipment, an attempt was made to teach the elements of the natural sciences. Jiu-jitsu was introduced for its educational value in 1917 and became very popular. Football was a rapid success in spite of the tropical climate, and soon three leagues were formed under the Education Department's guidance.

In the seventeenth century Père Tachard had taken with him back to France five sons of Siamese officials to be educated at the Collège Louis le Grand. Although a few of them did well, they all felt the effects of expatriation, especially the change of climate. The experiment was not repeated until the reign of Chulalongkorn, the only one of Mongkut's sons to learn English during his father's lifetime. Appreciating what a handicap the language deficiency was to the Siamese, Chulalongkorn sent his son abroad.

During the reign of Rama VI, more and more boys were sent abroad. Some were selected on a competitive basis, but the majority were chosen as a reward for their fathers' services. The basic idea was that the sons of capable officials had inherited their fathers' abilities, and also that the loyalty of the next generation of officialdom would thus be insured. But many of the fathers had not received their posts through ability. The results of this educational system were not immediately apparent, and only became obvious about 1930 when these foreign-educated students sat for examinations in the university. Then the innumerable failures and the few notable successes drew attention to the fundamental error in the nomination system.

Many of the flaws in the educational system were attributable to the perennial paucity of teachers and to inadequate finances; but there were still others largely within current remedy. For example, to spare expense and to reach the many who could not send their deserving sons abroad, an institution bearing the exaggerated title of Chulalongkorn University was set up in 1917 around the nucleus of the old Civil Service College, to dispense higher education in the capital. It did so chiefly by absorbing into fine new buildings the heretofore scattered schools of Administration, Engineering, Medicine, Literature, and Science. Since this step was taken entirely without foreign assistance, inexperience played a large role in the mistakes that abounded in the university's early years. In 1917 only thirty-seven students passed the first entrance examination. Probably the disillusionment attendant upon the sad results of this effort to establish a worthy Siamese university turned official attention to the root of the trouble—the primary education system, which was not properly feeding students into the upper stratum.

As the organization then stood, it was divided into government schools, maintained and controlled by State funds; local schools, supported partly by local voluntary contributions and partly by school fees; and wholly private schools like those initiated and run by the missions. The curriculum for primary education, in the case of those not going on to higher schools, gave three years to primary education and two further years to more general education and to vocational training appropriate to the particular region in which the school was located. School terms and hours were also adapted to regional needs and transportation facilities. Secondary education was also subdivided, and the eight years' course could be finished by a boy of ability in six or seven years. The tradition of free education offered in the *wats* was perpetuated in the form of fairly numerous scholarships. Fees varied regionally. But in general primary education cost Tcs. 2 a year; and the best secondary schools charged Tcs. 40, a considerable sum for the average Siamese.

In 1918-19, on the eve of a radical change in Siam's educational policy, only 2 per cent of the girls of school age were receiving instruction, as compared with 20 per cent of the boys. There were 157,684 pupils in 3,340 primary and secondary schools, and 18,233 students in 522 private schools. This marked a slight increase over the past decade, but it was hard to speed up the process when the budgetary allotment for education was only about \$500,000 for the whole country. Although the majority of schools were under the Department of Education, they were actually run by the local authorities and supported as far as possible by voluntary contributions, which amounted at this time to Tcs. 2,500,000. The Government defrayed only the cost of inspection.

The total amount spent on local education worked out at less than Tcs. 3 per head<sup>4</sup>; yet the local schools were the foundation on which the whole educational system of the country was being built. Financially it was impossible for the Government to supplant them by its own schools; in fact, in 1918-19, as a result of the rice famine, the State even had to waive the small fee charged in some government schools, increase the number of scholarships, and open free schools for the poorest communities. The cost to

the Government per pupil in the state schools was about \$10, and half of the educational budget was expended in Bangkok.

One of the most serious phases of the educational problem was the small percentage of pupils who continued their education beyond the primary course. Only a fifth of all the boys of school age had elementary instruction at all, and out of every thousand primary school pupils less than fourteen moved on to the secondary course; moreover, half of the secondary educational facilities were provided only in the capital. Obviously there was a need to extend and improve higher education in Siam, but the only effective way to raise educational standards was to broaden the base through a compulsory Education Act. Since parents were reluctant to leave their children in school because the time when they would be economically productive was thus postponed, it was decided to establish a policy of free compulsory education for all boys and girls between the ages of seven and fourteen, with a liberal grant of scholarships and a reasonable fee for education beyond this stage.

As a preliminary, a law enforcing the registration of all private schools was put into force in July 1919, by which these institutions were required to conform to state regulations and receive governmental inspection. This law applied equally to the mission schools, of which forty were French, thirteen English, ten American, five Portuguese, and one Belgian; and to the other private schools, of which three were Chinese, twenty-six Indian and Malayan, and 307 Siamese. All pupils were to be taught to read and write simple Siamese, and the instruction imparted was to create respect for the country through a knowledge of its history and geography. High standards were set up for teachers, but they were so scarce that a provisional toleration of less qualified instructors was permitted in "Ward" schools.

Certain slight misunderstandings that arose in connection with these regulations were soon cleared up in regard to the mission schools, but they laid the foundation for many of the difficulties that later came up in the case of the Chinese schools. Ever since the Chinese Revolution of 1911, these institutions had been regarded with suspicion by the Siamese as possibly inculcating

revolutionary principles. Their rapid growth synchronized with the widening of the abyss between the Siamese and Chinese populations. But the only partial application of this rule, and its remission for a decade in Bangkok, permitted the initial agitation to die down.

The most important event of the year 1921 was the promulgation of the Compulsory Education Law in September. Variations within the seven to fourteen age limits were permitted in accordance with local conditions. Local support of schools through the Education Ccss, which had been levied in different ways in different communities, was replaced by a uniform national tax, ranging from one to three ticals per adult male according to local economic conditions. The system of free scholarships, which had come into force in 1914, was greatly extended; and by 1922 they were being given to 1,484 pupils.

By 1922 the number of schools in Siam had increased by 81 per cent, and the number of pupils by 96.6 per cent, over the 1916 figures. The law was reported to be in smooth operation in 52 per cent of the communes. The amount of the new educational tax was set at Tcs. 1,513,626, of which 77 per cent was collected.

In 1927 the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs was once more incorporated into the Ministry of Education, from which it had been detached a decade before. This reversal of policy showed the more closely knit relations between religion and state education. With the increase in the number of students under the new law—378,281 in the first four years,—more use was made of the *wats*; in 1926 *wat* schools formed 80 per cent of all the government schools and only dwindled by 10 per cent in the following decade. Out of 6,541 schools of all kinds in Siam in 1928, *wat* schools still accounted for 68.8 per cent.<sup>5</sup> The climax to this renewal of the old educational function of the Church came in the king's birthday speech in 1929, when he formally introduced religious instruction into the curriculum of all government schools.

Although the number of schools had increased from 178,052 to 625,741 between the years 1918 and 1928, the number of teachers only rose from 5,275 to 14,544. The average monthly salary for teachers in government schools was Tcs. 41 throughout the country and Tcs. 53 in Bangkok. In local schools, where the Govern-

ment paid 46 per cent of the expenses and the classes were larger, salaries averaged Tcs. 9.76 monthly, which was less than the wage paid for the lowest kind of manual labor. The problem of improving Siamese education was obviously financial.

In the field of higher education great building activity followed upon the University's renewal of cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation in 1928. The curriculum and scope of the Government commercial school was extended; new courses in the liberal arts and engineering were initiated; and a special effort was made to give better agricultural training to the vast majority of students who chose this vocational course. Athletics also responded to official encouragement; and the number of boy scouts grew from 57,264 in 1929 to 87,904 on the eve of the revolution.

### *Education under the Constitutional Régime*

In education, as in so much else, the new régime in Siam has made no radical departure from the policies inaugurated by the absolute monarchy. However, it immediately made clear that education would be put in the forefront of its policy. Two months after the *coup d'état* a Board of Education numbering fifteen was appointed for four years to draw up a system of national education. In December it announced its recommendations. Henceforth the standard of teaching in every grade must be raised; higher education must also be developed to the point where Chulalongkorn University's degree would be the equivalent of the best Western diploma; the media and equipment of learning, textbooks, libraries, and laboratories, must be improved and increased; and religion must be made more effective as a factor in developing the humanities. Most important of all was the recommendation that the education laws of 1919 and 1921 be enforced immediately throughout the country.

The literal application of this old law had two far-reaching consequences. First, it increased the number of schools that, owing to lack of money, were placed provisionally in *wats*, thereby reinforcing the former Government's educational alliance with the Church. Secondly, it brought to the fore the problem of the Chinese schools, which had such serious effects on the economic situation that the policy had to be unofficially modified.

*Government Control of Education*

The application of the law of 1921 not only seriously affected the Chinese schools but also had the unintended effect of striking a blow at mission education, which had always maintained the highest academic standards in the country. Some of the parochial schools were now forced to close down because they did not conform to the new official standards. This would not have been so serious if private and public schools had been competitive; but some of the mission schools were now forced to stop functioning in places where no other schools existed at all, or where such schools as existed were overcrowded. Moreover, the regulations were applied more strictly to private than to Government schools.

The Elementary Education Act of November 1935 incorporated the Primary Education Law of 1921, but the Ministry of Public Instruction was now empowered to modify its application to private schools. In May 1937 a new Act along the same lines further increased governmental control. All instruction was to be given in Siamese, except for foreign language courses; and it was required that all material and books used should be submitted to the Ministry for approval.

A further step in the direction of Government control was taken in 1937 when the Government for the first time resolved to subsidize certain private schools. Heretofore, on account of the religious or foreign flavor of most of these enterprises, the Government had confined its gifts to land grants, clocks, and royal photographs.

*Primary Education*

Under the constitution it was stipulated that the granting of complete franchise would be dependent on more than half of the electorate having passed an elementary examination. Although the Educational Report for 1929-32 stated that the Primary Education Law had already been enforced in 83 per cent of the communes, more realistic observers thought that only about a third, or at most half, of the children of school age were receiving formal instruction. The majority of provincial Siamese have no desire to send their children—especially girls—to school and in some regions whole villages decamp if a school is opened near by. Often it is

impossible to prosecute parents who really need the additional earnings which their children bring in. The census of 1937 showed a total literacy of 31.1 per cent; 47 per cent of the males were literate, and 14.9 per cent of the females.

### *Education Funds*

An Assembly discussion in January 1934 forcibly drew the Government's attention to the great need for more provincial schools, for which the current budgetary allowance of Tcs. 2,500,000 was ridiculously inadequate. As a result, the Government raised the budgetary allotment by Tcs. 2,000,000 in March 1934 and maintained it at that level during the following years of depression. The real worth of this effort can be appreciated when it is realized that Tcs. 1,500,000 was obtained from sources other than taxation.

In 1935 the budgetary appropriation for education amounted to Tcs. 9,500,000, of which Tcs. 1,000,000 went to the university, 3,400,000 to the Education Department, and 4,000,000 to primary education, the balance being devoted to vocational and technical training. The budget discussion showed an appreciation of the inadequacy of such a sum and of the necessity of increasing the allotment for primary education and of raising teachers' salaries. In 1937 the education appropriation was raised to Tcs. 11,181,402. This was not a dazzling sum, but it was more than treble the last appropriation under the old régime. By 1938 the Ministry of Public Instruction ranked third on the budget with an appropriation of Tcs. 14,000,000, which was raised by another million the following year.

### *Women's Education*

During the last decade of the absolute monarchy it was women's education that took the greatest strides forward as a result of the law making primary education compulsory. In 1932, out of the 788,846 Siamese children in school, 309,622 were girls—a fact of enormous importance for the coming generation of Siamese. There was still a dearth of women teachers, however, since comparatively few girls pursued their education to the point where they could take the final government examinations. However, since entrance



to the university has been placed on a competitive basis, a girl has won first prize for essay writing at the university, where about 15 per cent of all the students are women; and in 1936 a girl for the first time won one of the king's scholarships for study abroad. The majority of the women who have distinguished themselves academically in Siam have been trained in the mission schools, which still give the best education for girls in the country. This is no longer true of boys' education, however, as Government schools have in many cases come up to mission standards.

Co-education is the rule for 94.6 per cent of primary school students, in spite of the fact that about 80 per cent of these schools are still held in *wats*. The universities are also co-educational, but only once has co-education been tried in secondary schools. This experiment was made by a mission school in Chiengrai; it was not part of a planned policy but the result of an economy measure during the depression, by which two formerly separate schools were combined. Although in this instance it has worked out well, its sponsors hold no brief for it in general, and attribute its success to a remarkable corps of teachers. Though it is well known that the morals of undergraduates are not up to Buddhistic standards, it would be hard to get typical Siamese to agree to such a statement. In spite of a determination to be modern and Western, the present Government is definitely opposed to co-education in secondary schools.

### *Secondary Education*

Just as the main problem in the provinces was the improvement of primary education, so Bangkok's chief concern was with secondary education, and in particular with the question of providing a suitable curriculum. The curriculum problem is closely related to the employment problem, which in turn affects the attitude of parents and students towards school attendance.

In the old days upper-class parents felt that their children fell in general esteem unless they had some sort of degree; titles came with Government positions, which in turn were open only to those with the appropriate diplomas. For many years after Siam began to Westernize herself there was an opening in the civil service for every youth with an ordinary education; and long after

that ceased to be the case, all those who completed the secondary course were assured of safe clerical positions in Government or commercial offices. Some people foresaw the dangers; the late Prince of Bisnulok was wont to protest angrily against a system that was training a nation of clerks. But it was not until the advent of the constitutional régime that drastic steps were taken to remedy the situation.

The language question has been one of Siam's chief educational problems. Not only has it been found difficult to enforce the serious study of Siamese in foreign-run schools; but the lack of specific and technical terms, as well as the absence of cultural contributions in the Siamese language, have made the use of another medium essential. English has been chosen as this supplementary linguistic vehicle, but the result has too often been that the student spends more than half his time mastering a language that he never subsequently uses. The growing nationalism of the 1920's produced a movement, which has spread more rapidly of late, to develop Siamese as a suitable medium for secondary education by enriching it with foreign terms. In recent years European-trained Siamese have been urged to write better textbooks. When it was found that one foreign manual used in the schools had been advocating "difficult" communistic principles,<sup>6</sup> the Minister of Education asked for textbooks that would teach the value of "self-reliance and social responsibility." On practical grounds French and German are being dropped from secondary school curricula, to be taught only in the university and in special schools. In Bangkok even the French and German firms do business in English.

A more important departure than this curtailing of foreign language study is the policy initiated in 1938, which obliges students to choose either a vocational or an academic career after *Matayom* 6. The last two grades have been suppressed for all students except those going on to the university, chiefly for the economic reasons that parents cannot afford to give their children so long a general education and that the country cannot afford to wait so long for their productive services. Moreover, this advancement of the academic crossroads by two years has made students less liable to drift automatically into white collar employment. Secondary education through *Matayom* 6 is to be made available throughout the coun-

try. With the money saved from economizing on the last two years of the secondary course, the Government hopes to build more vocational and commercial schools and to secularize primary education. As a result of this new practical turn given to higher education, mission schools are splitting their course into general education for those undecided as to what profession they will pursue, and special preparation for those going abroad to study, with emphasis on the training of Christian teachers. With traditional docility Siamese students are pursuing the scientific courses that the Government is now encouraging. Three faculties in the university, as well as the army and navy schools, require such preliminary training.

### *Vocational Education*

In 1902, when the Survey Department first offered a reasonably good career to Siamese youths, Europeans in Bangkok were surprised that, far from competing keenly to enroll, students had to be paid to enter a school whose field work was distasteful to them. The same lack of interest was shown in the Forestry Department's offer of scholarships for the training of forestry officers, and apathy also caused the failure of the Government's attempt to improve the silk industry. Manual work continued to be regarded as degrading and as the special province of peasants, and for years no School of Agriculture was opened in the country.

The Primary School Act of 1921 provided that after the first three years a student might choose vocational education for the last two years of his elementary course, which in more than 90 per cent of the cases meant agricultural training. Of the older vocational schools, the Arts and Crafts School has been the most successful. The Forestry School at Phrae, which was opened in 1937, has produced twenty-five graduates after a two-year course. The Forestry School at Singora has not been very satisfactory, but the poor quality of its teaching is insignificant beside the bare fact of its existence. The Udenthevai School for Architecture was founded to train young Siamese in building construction.

The Arts and Crafts School offers a five years' course, for which there are general educational requirements. Carpentry and basket

work are taught; and instruction is given in painting and sculpture, in which European models and technique are used predominantly. Sometimes Siamese subject matter is used, notably in preparing posters and *objets d'art* for Government fairs, when art serves the State by producing allegorical interpretations of the six revolutionary principles. As the showroom well illustrates, *niello* work is the outstanding Siamese artistic contribution. The greatest single difficulty is finding a market for it. Japanese articles can be bought for far less than native work, and the result is that most graduates of this school go into teaching or commercial advertising. Moreover, like all other trained Siamese, they insist on staying in Bangkok.

In 1938 the Government made a great effort to develop vocational education. In January new regulations were drawn up for the training of teachers for vocational courses, commerce, and the various professions; and questionnaires were sent to all the *changvads* to obtain information as to the kind of vocational schools they now needed. Among the requests approved were twenty-two for carpentry schools, and three for instruction in sculpture, tailoring, and metallurgy. The Government plans to open no less than 90 vocational schools throughout the kingdom, and a grant of Tcs. 400,000 has been made for this purpose.

Already in 1936 Chulalongkorn University had added three more degrees, two of which were in engineering and the natural sciences. In 1938 the Ministry of Education announced its intention of instituting a three-year course in mining at Singora, and the army decided to launch a polytechnic school with a two years' course for about a thousand students. Handicraft schools were also increased; and in the regions where hand-woven clothes were no longer being worn, the Government added weaving to the primary school curriculum. The Government also took over the agricultural schools at Haad Yai, Chiangmai, and Bangkok-noi, where it had been found necessary to raise the standard of studies; and the three hundred students of these schools were later moved to Bangkok. In 1940 the Government announced its intention of opening a new agricultural school at Bang Phra and a school for the training of officials for the Ministry of the Interior.

*Physical Education*

The English orientation of Siamese education is shown by the emphasis on physical training, which the new Government has continued. A Department of Physical Education was founded in 1936, and all new school buildings are being endowed with recreation grounds. Only students at Chulalongkorn University are exempted from military service, and a move to extend this exemption to other student bodies was defeated. Siamese boys have taken wholeheartedly to sports, and the result has been a striking change in their physique and character. Although games with group action have been particularly cultivated, as preparation for good citizenship, the spirit of sportsmanship has not always been successfully transplanted. In September 1937 a certain Siamese school team threw bricks at the lorry bearing away victorious rivals after a football match. Some of the winning team were even stabbed, and it is unfortunate that this is not an isolated incident in the history of Bangkok school sports.

*Higher Education*

In his opening address as Rector of Chulalongkorn University, Luang Bipul said that Siam must no longer depend on the West and that she must fulfil her own destiny by the development of higher education as a means to prosperity.<sup>7</sup> Chulalongkorn University is now twenty-four years old. In 1938 there were about a thousand students in the graduate school studying the liberal arts, science, engineering, architecture, medicine, nursing and midwifery, and veterinary science. Entrance has been placed on a competitive basis, which is meant to reserve it to the élite; but most of the aristocracy send their sons abroad to be educated. All instruction, except in political science, is given in English.

Education in Siam is still regarded as a means to a job rather than as an end in itself, and few continue their studies after graduation. However, it must be recognized that the facilities for individual study are not great as there are virtually no research libraries and environmental stimulus is singularly lacking. The student who returns with zeal from his Occidental studies and resolves to keep up with developments in his field finds that there is almost no

material available in Bangkok. Moreover, his energies are consumed in mastering a new job and in warding off the antagonism and contempt that he encounters from his fellow-workers who have not enjoyed similar advantages. Scientists, however, have an easier row to hoe. With the excellent laboratory equipment in Bangkok hospitals and universities they can continue their researches, and there are many more openings in their field.

The Law School was incorporated with Chulalongkorn University in 1933 and was detached from it a year later to become the nucleus of a University of Moral and Political Sciences. Its prototype was the Parisian *École des Hautes Études Politiques*, and its founder, Luang Pradit, who created it as a democratic bulwark against the rising tide of militarism. He was made its president as an appropriate counterbalance to Luang Bipul's appointment as Rector of Chulalongkorn University in November 1936. There is no entrance examination to this new school, which has correspondence courses in architecture, engineering, and teaching. It is, in fact, more of an institute than a university. That it answers a popular demand is shown by the fact that it received 7,094 applications for enrolment before it had even opened its doors.

Chulalongkorn University has been justly criticized for having placed too great a linguistic burden on the Siamese student, especially in the matter of written work; moreover, it has suffered from a too rapid turnover in the teaching staff. Nevertheless, it is the only serious institution of higher learning in the country; and its rival is but another illustration of the unfortunate Siamese tendency to divert energies and ability into new and spectacular enterprises. Late in 1939 it was announced that a third university, with medical and engineering schools, is to be opened in Lopburi. Its avowed aim is to lessen the need for Siamese to go abroad to complete their instruction.

### *Siamese Students Abroad*

One of the constitutional Government's first and most startling steps was to recall at short notice the hundred students then studying in England at State expense. The twenty-six King's Scholars who were left had to adhere to a stricter schedule. Prajadhipok had improved the calibre of the Siamese students sent abroad, but

the majority still seemed unable to adjust themselves or to get much out of their European sojourn. Dissimilar backgrounds and the fear of their foreign classmates' ridicule prevented the average Siamese student from mingling with other nationalities. Social life and sports became a nightmare to many of them and they frequented chiefly their compatriots.

In spite of the improvement in local education the present Government is beginning to show a new appreciation of the value of foreign training. Now more students than ever—about 500—are being educated abroad. Ministerial protégés are bound upon their return to enter Government service and without salary stipulation. With the exception of those sponsored by the Ministry of Defense, allowances for study abroad have been reduced to \$1500 a year. Though England and, secondarily, France have held European preference, the most notable trend in recent years has been the dispatch of about 200 students to Japan and to the Philippines.

#### *Academic Reaction to the Constitutional Régime*

At first students seemed to be taking some part in the revolution of 1932. In July of that year 122 University students petitioned the People's Party to transfer their Rector to another post. Since he amiably resigned at once, students and even teachers were encouraged to send in more requests. By September 1932, the 400 members of the semi-official Teachers' Association, founded in 1912, asked for complete independence. They succeeded in securing the removal of a certain number of officials in return for promising not to form cliques among themselves along party lines.

The only active manifestation of academic unrest was a strike organized by the boys of Assomption and St. Gabriel's Colleges in September 1932, which occurred at about the same time as the tramway and ricksha strikes. Although the press and their parents unanimously supported the mission's disciplinary measures, the People's Party took the strike to heart as a test of its organization and of the new administration. But this was the beginning and end of revolutionary student action which never extended beyond this flash in the pan. It is curious that there has been not a single instance of revolt among university students who have remained listless and indifferent to any youth movement beyond a football league. They

love the trappings of Western academic institutions but neglect the library and laboratory facilities.

Students do not talk politics, and to arouse their interest in current topics a debating society was formed about a decade ago. The proviso to avoid political and religious controversy was superfluous, as was Luang Bipul's admonition to students not to mix in politics. Nor do they resent the intensified paternalism of the present régime. While school children are encouraged to watch army parades, they are likewise cautioned against permanent waves, beer halls and lipstick. Even students abroad are not exempt from the guiding hand. Those in the United States a few years ago were warned against the four vices of cards, liquor, women and horse racing.



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## XXV · PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION

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### *The Mission Press*

The press was first introduced into Siam by the missions. The French Mission, which was established at Ayuthia in 1662, printed in Roman characters a number of religious tracts, a grammar, and a dictionary, all compiled by the scholar-bishop Laneau. After the sack of Ayuthia the mission was reorganized at Bangkok, where in 1794 it printed, still in Roman letters, a catechism and several other works in the Siamese language.<sup>1</sup> It expanded its printing activities in the early nineteenth century, but it was not until 1850 that it first used Siamese characters. In the meantime, in 1836, the Baptist Mission had produced a tract in Siamese characters on a press brought from Bengal; and three years later it printed 9,000 copies of the king's edict outlawing opium. In 1861 the Presbyterian Mission established its press in Siam.

Newspapers naturally followed in the wake of the press. It was the versatile missionary, Dr. D. B. Bradley, who published the first newspaper in Siam in 1844. This weekly publication lasted for sixteen months, and in 1865 Dr. Bradley revived it as a fortnightly entitled the *Bangkok Recorder*. This time it lasted for two years until it was forced to close down largely as the result of a libel action brought by the French consul Anbaret. A little later Dr. Bradley continued his journalistic activities on the staff of the *Siam Weekly Monitor*, edited by S. d'Encourt; but this paper, too, had a short life.

The final mission attempt at journalism was through the Lao press, which like its Bangkok predecessor did government work as well. It also served to prevent the extinction of the Lao language, which had no printed literature. By controlling the only press in the region the mission was able to exercise an unofficial but effective censorship over all "harmful" books.<sup>2</sup> For years the mission

published the only paper in northern Siam, the *Laos Christian News*. Its subscribers numbered about a thousand.

### *The Foreign Language Press*

In 1864 a secular paper, the *Siam Times*, was started by an American, J. H. Chandler, but was short-lived. Soon afterwards three new papers were born almost simultaneously, of which one—*The Siam Advertiser*, edited by an Englishman, S. Smith—survived for seventeen years.

In 1887 the *Bangkok Times* was established by T. Lloyd Williams as a small weekly journal. It was almost immediately followed by the *Mercantile Gazette*, published by a German, Gotte, who had a grievance against the Siamese Government. On his staff was an Irish rebel and journalistic genius, J. J. Lillie, who had come to Bangkok as a teacher at Assomption College. When the *Mercantile Gazette* was forced to close down as a result of the publication of an uncomplimentary article about the king, Lillie, in 1891, founded the *Siam Free Press* as a rival to the prospering *Bangkok Times*. In 1898 he was expelled from the country for having insulted the sovereign, the Government, and the people of Siam, and for having sent false and alarming communications to foreign countries. The *Siam Free Press* was continued for a few years by one of the ablest journalists who ever came to Siam, Francis McCullough; but it was eventually sold to an American, P. A. Hoffman, from the up-country staff of one of the British teak firms. He soon sold his holding to Siamese interests, but the editorial staff of the paper, now re-christened the *Bangkok Daily Mail*, continued to be American-dominated until its demise in 1933.

A third English newspaper that appeared at the end of the nineteenth century was the *Siam Observer*, published by the Tilleke family. This journal took over the *Siam Directory*, which had begun to appear in 1878 and which has survived with an occasional lapse to the present day under the name of the *Directory for Bangkok and Siam*. The *Observer's* circulation was never large; and although it received a government subsidy, it finally closed down in 1933.

The *Bangkok Times*, of all the English-language papers, has

survived the longest, the most profitably, and with the greatest honor from both Siamese and foreign readers. Starting as a weekly, it became a daily in 1896. Willamese had the good fortune in his pioneer days to find a staunch supporter in a Siamese prince, who lent him machinery, type, and even money. Another stroke of luck was the arrival of a free-lance writer, Charles Thorne, who relinquished a picturesque career in the jungle to take over, eventually, the whole editorial responsibility. When Willamese returned to Europe in 1894, Thorne bought out the controlling interest. The present editor-in-chief, Mr. Mundy, joined the staff two years later and became Thorne's partner in 1904. Thorne left Siam permanently in 1908, but he remained the chief shareholder until 1923.

Few important journalists found Siamese news worthy of their constant attention, and many refused a post in Siam because "nothing ever happens there." In addition to the fiery staff of the *Free Press*, Dr. G. E. Morrison made a meteoric descent on Siam. Sir Henry Norman also did journalistic work there, but his name in Siam has survived chiefly in connection with his book *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*. Henri Cucherousset wrote of Siam, but he will remain better known for his Indo-Chinese periodical *L'Eveil Economique*.

### *The Vernacular Press and Government Control*

For many years after the printing press had appeared in Siam, the *wats* continued to monopolize the country's literary output. It was a very common sight in Siam, well into the twentieth century, to see priests and their disciples squatting on the floor of the temple preparing palm leaf manuscripts for some of the sacred books. Printing had made little ecclesiastical headway because it was regarded with disfavor by the conservative priesthood.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it was more expensive than writing on palm leaves, which were brought to the *wats* by peasants as a means of making merit. These manuscripts were never made available to the public as they were considered far too sacred, and priests would part with them only with the greatest reluctance. Until Prince Damrong began his systematic collection for the National Museum, these manuscripts had to be copied for study at the *wats*.

Under Chulalongkorn a Royal Printing Office was established, but it confined its activities to publishing a *Government Gazette and Court News* with a very limited circulation. When it tried to print currency notes, tax receipts, and postage stamps, there were so many counterfeits that the task had eventually to be entrusted to European printers. In 1874 one of the princes began to print a vernacular sheet called *Darunawabt*, but it proved to be too spicy for old Siam and died within a year of its birth. Other attempts at almanacs, magazines, and papers, such as the weekly magazine *Sayam Samai*, founded in 1882, were short-lived.

Government control of the press under the old régime was a curiously inconsistent affair. To judge by certain articles, the press was as free as in Europe;<sup>4</sup> and many discontented Government officials sought an outlet for injured feelings through this medium. Under the Siamese libel law Bangkok journalists could be imprisoned for three years and fined Tcs. 1,500 for defamation of the royal family, contempt of law, or incitement to revolt. State subsidies were effective in confining the press to publishing only such news as the Government was pleased to furnish. Often the king's speech reached the press a week after its delivery, and notice of the arrival of foreign emissaries came to the paper some time after their departure. Obviously, in the early days, public opinion was so embryonic, and the press so insignificant a vehicle, that the Government did not bother to keep it either informed or suppressed. Chulalongkorn initiated a resumé of the year's events in his birthday speeches; and this, with a few official reports, formed the sole consistent governmental contributions to the better information of the Siamese public.

A new attitude towards the press was evident in the reign of Rama VI, who both before and after his accession showed a real interest in journalism and himself wrote articles castigating any opinion of which he disapproved. He wrote in English in the *Siam Observer* and in Siamese in the *Nangsue Bimb Dai*. Early in his reign Siam enjoyed a virtually free press. But later on his liberal attitude towards the press underwent a change, largely as a result of the war. In 1919 a Newspaper Act was promulgated inaugurating a mild censorship under the chief of staff, the Prince of Bisnulok. Thereafter every paper had to submit two proofs of all articles

of a military nature, and all criticism of the bureaucracy was forbidden. In application this censorship was gentle, and journalists managed to get around it by means of satiric verse in which animal symbolism was used as in the mediaeval allegories. Thus, when a newspaper wanted to ridicule the provincial governors, whose conferences were always held during the rainy season, it ran poems on water buffaloes. The Siamese language was well adapted to such indirect attacks, and this method enjoyed a great success.

The accession of Prajadhipok marked a more clearly defined governmental attitude toward the press. In 1927 a more stringent press law was promulgated, whereby those wishing to become editors were required to have passed *Matayom* 6. The Government stated that the growth of the vernacular press, which was certainly distinguished neither for its accuracy nor for its integrity, made it essential for Siamese journalism to assume more responsibility for its statements and to raise its general tone. The first paper to be suppressed was the *Sri Krung*, the first Siamese journal to use modern methods of publicity and diffusion; though inclined to be sensational, it had been ably edited. Later, two other papers were closed down. The only Government organs were the *Gazette and Court Circular* and a technical periodical called *The Record*. The Government gave thousands of ticals annually to the English language papers, but no scholarships to Siamese to learn good journalism.

In the absence of a press bureau, the vernacular press was put under the surveillance of the C.I.D., which performed the negative task of closing down papers without making any compensatory effort to keep the public better informed. Nor did it attempt to improve the vernacular papers, which printed more sensational rumors than news and aired more invective and scandal than reasoned policy. The best of the news commentators were the *Karn Muang* and the *Krung Deb Daily Mail*. The *Nangsue Bimb Dai*, run by Government officials, came to an end in the early days of the revolution because its readers knew its point of view before opening the pages. The threat of a libel suit was usually enough to silence any Siamese journal. The nominal editor of a Siamese paper was usually only a figurehead—often the office coolie—whose salary included payment of the penalty in case of prosecution. His

employers never defended him as they found it cheaper and less troublesome to admit the libel and hire another "editor."

Just before the revolution the two most important English-language papers, the *Bangkok Times* and the *Daily Mail*, as well as the less influential *Observer*, had been receiving an annual subsidy of Tcs. 8,000 from the Government. The *Bangkok Times* was consistently dull and conservative and was read with grave respect by most of the foreigners and all the educated Siamese, in spite of its mildly supercilious attitude towards things Siamese. It upheld the forces of righteousness and the British Empire. For many years without a serious rival, it had come to live on its reputation, earning far more from its advertising than from its eight hundred subscribers.

The *Daily Mail*, which had been bought out by Rama VI, had become a drain on the Privy Purse; and in 1927 the king sold it to his father-in-law, Prince Svasti. In 1928 this anglophobe Prince hired as editor an American-Jewish journalist, A. A. Freeman. Technically well-equipped, Freeman was a crusader, who employed tabloid methods. Photography in the Hearst manner was supplemented by sensational revelations of police corruption and Bangkok prostitution; and an attack on the Paknam Railroad administration brought the paper's circulation up to about 1,200. Its price of Tcs. 25 a year removed it from the luxury class of the *Bangkok Times*, which charged Tcs. 60, and of the *Observer*, which charged Tcs. 50, and permitted it to circulate among more of the English-reading Asiatics.

Freeman antagonized the European colony in Bangkok, particularly the *Bangkok Times* and its public. Svasti, who was pro-American, was delighted. The king was at first amused by the new editor's energy and reforming zeal, but he had to call a halt when the French Legation protested against articles featuring the king of Cambodia's relations with a Siamese dancing girl. The government subsidy was withdrawn; and Freeman was succeeded by two able American journalists, Don Garden and St. Clair McKelway, aided by Nai Louis Girivat. Under their direction the paper became heavily weighted on the side of editorial comment. The generally conservative color of its comments makes it astonishing to realize that this paper was regarded as radical. Though the *Daily Mail*

continued to score corruption in public service and to utter mildly liberal political sentiments, it was ultra-conservative in regard to economic theories.

The delay in receiving news—even such an important item as the resignation of a Cabinet Minister—compelled the papers to obtain their information through underground channels. Ever since the number of Siamese dailies had begun to multiply, there had been a regular leakage of confidential information from the various Ministries to the press. For a time the Government took no steps in the matter; but when news of a Cabinet crisis leaked out in this way, its attitude changed.

The crisis in question was the dispute between Prince Bovaradej and the Prince of Nagor Svarga, which was reported in detail in the *Daily Mail* and taken up by the rest of the press. That the episode caused embarrassment to the Government was shown by its request that the press drop the whole matter. The Siamese dailies said that they would gladly do so if the Government would issue periodical statements. To this the Government made no reply, and nothing was subsequently done to change the existing ill-defined situation.

In December 1931 the king designated a member of his secretarial staff to act as editor of the *Bimb Dai*, which for a few weeks carried articles explaining the measures taken by the Government to meet the economic crisis and defending them against criticisms published in other vernacular papers. Although the gravity of the depression had much to do with this, it is unlikely that the Government would have officially concerned itself even now with the local press if the *Daily Mail* had not shown itself capable of informing the public on vital matters that were officially taboo.

The vernacular press, encouraged by the success Freeman had enjoyed, was becoming more sensationally tabloid and very free in its criticisms of Ministers, although still sparing the royal family. The result was the suppression, in the last months before the *coup d'état*, of three vernacular papers, two Siamese and one Chinese, and the censoring of reading matter for school children. This growing tendency towards censorship and control of the press clearly antedated the revolution; but as in so many other cases, the new régime added a fresh impetus to the policy of its predecessor.

*The Constitutional Régime and the Press*

The most striking aspect of the new Government's relations with the press is the discrepancy between theory and practice. Freedom of the press is a cardinal principle of democracy, and as such it has consistently received tributes from the new leaders. But in reality, censorship has been enforced with an increasing severity.

The *coup d'état* of June 1932 certainly provided Siamese journalism, despite immediate censorship, with the most sensational copy in its history. It waxed enthusiastic about the new democracy, but was soon disillusioned as far as its own freedom was concerned. Early in July Phya Bahol announced the end of the censorship, adding that the People's Party was very grateful for the attitude of the press towards their movement. He expressed the hope that nothing would be written against the king or the princes that might destroy the new entente and requested all editors to consult the People's Party before publishing any confidential news that they might receive.

A week later the *Thai Num* accused Prince Parabatra of having accepted a bribe of £50,000 in connection with the contract for the Memorial Bridge; and soon afterwards another vernacular paper published an article with the gay headline "Prince Greedy of Sexual Intercourse," in which the writer remarked that in the old days his paper would have been suppressed for such comments. This freedom was so liberally used to agitate for the removal of unpopular officials, and by officials themselves to air their views, that the Government issued an order that all such communications thereafter be sent directly to the interested Department and no longer to the press.

The Government soon showed that it had no intention of letting the press give the lead in its new policies. Although censorship was formally abolished in July 1932, four Siamese papers were temporarily closed down in September for publishing criticisms of the Government. It was simultaneously decided not to admit the press for the time being to the meetings of the Senate or to permit publication of news regarding the army or navy. This move drew ironical shafts from the *Daily Mail* about such unwarranted



ignoring of civil liberties by a supposedly democratic Government. The reply to this was a new press law, also in September 1932, formally censoring all political and military news. A few days later a fifth Siamese daily was suspended. The protests of the English language papers and of an occasional Siamese proprietor like Luang Vichitr were in vain. At the ceremony of the promulgation of the constitution in December, only six reporters, chosen by lot, were allowed to be present. The rest had to depend upon such information as was contributed by their rivals.

In March 1933 Phya Mano inaugurated a Press Bureau under Prince Sakol. Although this move was unpopular, it worked out better in practice than had been anticipated. Much more resentment was aroused by the reprimand administered by Phya Mano at a press meeting called in April in connection with Luang Pradit's economic plan. At this meeting he stated that he had been forced to close down the *Lak Muang* because it had protested against his allegedly high-handed treatment of the scheme. Since the State had deemed it wise to suppress Luang Pradit's plan, it was not for the press to recommend it to the people. He added that any paper advocating communist theories would be drastically dealt with.

When Phya Bahol staged his second *coup d'état* in June 1933, he proclaimed his belief in the freedom of the press.<sup>6</sup> He promised that in future the Government would welcome constructive criticism; and that before a paper was suspended, its offense would be thoroughly investigated. Although political articles still had to be submitted before publication, he asked editors as a favor to refrain from mentioning Luang Pradit's scheme or the king's report thereon. He also said that he would do his best to get the press admitted to Assembly meetings, but this was not effected until September. And finally, he gave assurances that the unpopular Publicity Bureau would be reorganized. Nevertheless, censorship increased with the Government's feeling of insecurity. The *Daily Mail* and two Siamese papers were suspended; a new warning against the publication of military news was issued in late July; and an investigation was begun to stop the leakage of confidential information to the press. This trend towards suppression finally came to a head during the October revolt.

In this revolt both sides made use of the written word in the most intensive effort yet made in Siam to win over public opinion. Strict censorship was immediately imposed. The Government's attitude towards the press was not softened by the revelation that the *Daily Mail* had served as Bangkok headquarters for Boveradej; and its Siamese editor, Nai Louis Girivat, was given a life sentence. A new regulation forbade the publication of news harmful to good morals, to treaty powers, or to the Government.

In February 1934 a new press law was passed; it again theoretically favored freedom of the press—when it did not interfere with public order, but raised the educational requirements for editors. This was followed by a new regulation in June subjecting editors, publishers, and printers to penalties under the censorship law; and it was reported that even the editor of the *Bangkok Times*, heretofore wonderfully adept at using indirect allusions and foreign reprints to convey what he dared not openly write, had had to sign a statement regretting the publication of a certain article and promising to be more careful in the future. Though none of the Chinese papers in Bangkok were penalized, certain Shanghai dailies were barred entry into Siam. Books embodying Sun Yat-sen's principles had been banned the year before.

Press censorship of the abdication story in the spring of 1935 showed how far the Government was going along the repressive path. The Bangkok public at first had to get its information exclusively through the foreign press. Finally, after much hesitation, the Government decided to print, with slight modification, the documents leading up to the abdication. An edition originally planned to number 60,000 copies was ultimately limited to 10,000—just enough for official distribution. The press was admonished not to publish extracts from the report but was permitted to publish the whole 465 pages in serial form.

Throughout 1935 and 1936 a more independent stand on many questions was being shown by the Assembly, which began to display growing irritation over the disparity between principle and practice in the application of the Press Act. But the Government, far from modifying its policy, tightened its control of the press still further. What chiefly caused the Government concern was the anti-foreign tone adopted by the press, which was hardly cal-

culated to forward the conclusion of the treaties then under negotiation. In the old days foreigners had been content to read the English language papers only, but after the revolution they began to make reports on the vernacular press to their home offices.

The remarkable reaction of the world press to the Boveradej revolt had finally awakened the Government to the fact that Siamese newspapers were being read outside the country, particularly in Singapore. By May 1937 the anti-foreign tone of the vernacular press had reached such a pitch that Luang Pradit himself administered a rebuke; and the following month a number of papers were suspended for not having taken his hint.

In the summer of 1938 a new law was passed granting greater freedom to the press. The registration of printing presses ceased to be compulsory, though the names of the publishers and editors still had to be registered. The period for which the Press Office could close down a paper was limited to a month, and for a longer suspension the approval of the Minister of the Interior became necessary. Shortly afterwards another forward step was taken with the repeal of the Act Safeguarding the Constitution, but two other attempts to amend the Press Act in a more liberal direction were defeated by large majorities. Although Luang Bipul, when he became Premier, promised further press reforms, there has so far been no noticeable change in the Government's policy.

The local Chinese press did not begin to arouse government attention until 1937. Only two Chinese papers antedated the revolution; and most of those that had subsequently sprung up were backed by wealthy merchants, who used them as a means of selling their wares. They contained little Siamese or foreign news. But since the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war, they have been periodically suspended, chiefly for advocating a boycott of Japanese goods.

In 1939 nine of the ten Chinese newspapers were closed down. The English language press has been naturally more cautious than the vernacular. Apart from the June 1934 incident, the *Bangkok Times* has been a model of discretion and has well earned its subsidies. When Luang Bipul made his famous and tactless broadcast in March 1937, the *Bangkok Times* refrained from editorial comment; and the *Siam Chronicle* merely summarized the speech and

expressed the hope that foreign nations would not take amiss what had been said about them.

The *Siam Chronicle*, Siamese-run and pro-American in its sympathies, was launched as an English language daily in May 1936. It was so successful that it soon put out a Siamese edition, the *Nikorn*. The circulation of the *Chronicle* is between 3,000 and 4,000, as compared with the *Bangkok Times*' circulation of 1,000-1,200. Its price is about half that of the *Times*, and its spicier news items give it an additional advantage over its rival. Both papers have such inadequate telegraphic service—Reuters for the *Bangkok Times* and Trans-Ocean for the *Chronicle*—that they are forced to resort to a considerable amount of padding. The *Chronicle* is forging ahead of its staid rival and is even winning official confidence in spite of the composition of its editorial staff, which includes many old *Daily Mail* hands and officials of the *ancien régime*. During the crown lands scandal it was praised for its moderate reporting and was, incidentally, the first paper in Siam to issue extras. An interesting confirmation of the survival of the old methods of obtaining news was shown by the fact that the papers were then able to come out with full reports of the Assembly discussions before the meetings, which were held *in camera*, had adjourned.

The cost of all Siamese newspapers places them in the luxury class. In spite of the country's abundant forest resources, paper has always been expensive and has become more so since the establishment of the government factory. It is hard to get advertising to defray expenses since it is realized that the purchasing power of the reading public is very low. Moreover, the frequent suspensions to which almost every paper has been subjected in the past seven years have been a serious financial drain. There are undoubtedly too many vernacular dailies; a city like Bangkok has room for two or three good papers, but not for the dozen or so that can now barely subsist. Probably more people are reading newspapers in Siam today than ever before. But even with the enormous increase in papers since the revolution and the expanding literacy, the provincial reading public is small. Obviously the next step in the development of Siamese journalism must be the establishment of provincial papers. The total circulation of all papers now in Siam

probably does not exceed 100,000, and it cannot be said that the Siamese press as a whole either voices or moulds public opinion.

#### PUBLIC OPINION

Under the old régime it was generally believed that the country belonged to the king; but when the new leaders told the people that the country belonged to them, they took it seriously and asked for the most impossible favors. They demanded the immediate abolition of taxation—in fact, they wanted Utopia in twenty-four hours. As late as June 1934 a provincial commissioner had to publish a long statement denying the rumor that the Government was distributing Tcs. 20 a month to families with many children, taking property from the rich to give it to the poor.

The People's Party had chosen its name in all sincerity, but it soon found that it had no contact with the people. Theoretically democracy continued to be lauded, but even its staunchest partisans had to admit that its application would have to be more gradual than had at first been supposed. Soon the pendulum swung so far back that it seemed as if democratic practice was going to be indefinitely postponed.

The first popular reaction took the form of a flood of petitions—in themselves nothing new for Siam, though their form and content were novel. A brick, for instance, thrown into the car of Phya Mano was a petitioner's way of announcing that he was hungry. After a period of vacillation and too easy acquiescence to the various requests, which usually called for the removal of an unpopular official, the Government stiffened its attitude. The people seemed to have made little progress since the days when they used the newly established postal system to send anonymous insults to everyone they disliked.

The new leaders realized that they must educate the people in whose name they had made the revolution, but they did not use the press or the Assembly as their medium. Agents were sent out to preach the revolution in the provinces. Village leaders were told to gather together the people of every race and language to listen to an explanation of the aims of the People's Party. Later, copies of the constitution were presented with great ceremony to the principal communities; and a definite attempt was made to

transfer popular allegiance from the king to the constitution. On the military side, the army used the *Yuwajon* and scout movement and periodical parades of armaments to make the people defense-minded. Radio broadcasts were made on constitutional holidays to instruct the people on national policy in a paternalistic and disciplinarian vein. In the meantime, though lip service was being continually paid to freedom of the press, more and more newspapers were being suppressed; and it was feared by many that, if opposition had no legitimate outlet, it might take the form of violence. Constitutional channels for the expression of public opinion were closed more and more firmly, and the Government used propaganda methods to "educate" the people in its support. The excuse always given for the non-application of democratic practice was that the country was not as yet ready for it.

It is interesting to note how few deliberate efforts the Government has made to enlist popular support, but the very fact that for the first time any such efforts were made at all is important. The Government has trusted chiefly to the obviousness of its good intentions and to its economic and educational programs. One of the first and most effective ways of enlisting popular support was to reduce taxation. But the new régime has been even less interested than the old régime in keeping the public officially informed. The annual reports of Departments and the king's résumé of events have lapsed and have been replaced only by vague reiterations of general policy.

Today the absence of accurate information to correct ever wilder rumors is particularly serious because the average Siamese is paying more attention to public affairs than ever before. At first the Government contented itself with issuing a communiqué if the rumors became too active. In ordinary circumstances this method, though negative, was effective; but when reports of troops being massed along the frontiers threatened Siam's diplomatic relations with her neighbors, or when doubts as to the soundness of the state finances were openly expressed, the Government realized it must take more positive measures. If the public had no way of judging what its representatives were doing, the Government on its side began to realize that it had no point of contact with mass reactions. Since it had refused to permit the formation of political parties, it

could not expect a free and instructive discussion in an Assembly where half the members were government appointees. The feeble attempts made by the press to guide national policy had been suppressed, and the Government had turned its back on articulate public opinion in favor of converting the conservative and passive masses.

The first official attempt to effect a contact with the bulk of the population consisted in sending out itinerant apostles of the new régime. They brought back word that it was hard to teach those who spent their lives in the rice fields and jungle that liberty and equality were worth sweeping a king from his throne.<sup>6</sup> The only sign of political discontent they could report was the formation of a new and secret Communist Party, which declared itself no better pleased with new "democratic" régime than it had been with the absolute monarchy. It seemed unlikely, however, that this party would secure any real following in rural Siam.

During the historical ceremony in the Throne Hall when the king signed the permanent constitution, it was obvious that the spectators, who were not so numerous as had been expected, were entirely unaware of the significance of the occasion. Loud speakers kept the people informed of each stage of the proceedings; conch shells were blown; and the king appeared on the balcony to the strains of the national anthem. But the crowd below thought that it was all a novel kind of ceremonial rather than a national event that concerned them profoundly. The same impressive ceremonial was duplicated in the provinces, to the general mystification of the populace. But the new unity that these ceremonies were supposed to indicate was soon disrupted by two successive *coups d'état*, which had the effect of completely bewildering the people.

With the advent of Phya Bahol as Premier, a new factor in political propaganda made its appearance—the radio. When a member of the Assembly asked the Government how it proposed to utilize the radio to educate the people, the Premier replied that the monks would be asked to deliver moral exhortations that might help arrest the provincial crime wave. This set the tone of the policy that the Government has since pursued consistently with respect to the radio, which has remained wholly state-controlled. In July 1933, in celebration of the Buddhist Lent, a Siamese sovereign for

the first time talked directly to his people on a current crisis, appealing for unity and self-sacrifice. The Premier and his Ministers subsequently addressed appeals for popular support or offered explanations of their policies, in which patriotic avowals and the absence of vindictiveness were characteristically Siamese. Characteristic also was the paternally chiding tone in which the people were instructed to trust in the Government, not to mistake license for liberty, and not to be impatient because Siam was not moving more swiftly towards complete democracy. On one occasion the Assembly was even publicly censored in a broadcast for having dared to criticize military expenditure.<sup>7</sup> The earlier tendency to fear the radio as a possible agency of political perversion has been replaced by a growing appreciation of its utility in an illiterate country as a medium of government propaganda.

All radio sets in Siam have to be registered. At the end of 1935 they numbered about 28,000, most of them of cheap Japanese manufacture. Originally they were confined to Bangkok, but a traveler in rural Siam in 1937 reported that he saw aërials even in remote villages. An early attempt to broadcast the Bangkok paddy prices as a means of eliminating profiteering was futile because radio sets were beyond the means of the average peasant. A committee set up to study the situation unfortunately concentrated on improving the programs rather than on bringing down the tax on receivers, which brought in too little revenue to justify the expense and annoyance it caused radio owners. Many preferred to risk owning unregistered sets rather than conform to all the requirements. However, the belief that broadcasting should be a national service has gained such ground of late that the Government is even considering a plan for supplying every home in the Bangkok Inner Circle with cheap sets.

There are only two broadcasting stations operating in Siam, both run by the Post and Telegraph Department. The evening programs are wholly in Siamese, though there is an occasional broadcast for the benefit of the Western-educated Siamese. The Government has also recently launched two afternoon broadcasts a week especially for schools. The programs are chiefly music, lectures, Siamese plays, and official news; and news reports, interspersed with propaganda, are also provided by the international



services. Recently Chungking, Singapore, and Saigon have been broadcasting in the Siamese language. There is practically no commercial advertising on the radio, since newspaper advertising is far cheaper.

A new stage in the Government's relations with public opinion was reached during the revolt of October 1933. Both sides tried to enlist popular support; and rebel planes flew over Bangkok dropping leaflets, which the Government countered by sixty soothing communiqués and broadcasts. Though it was soon obvious that Bovaradej and his followers had failed to interpret public sentiment accurately, the Government felt that its prestige had not been sufficiently enhanced simply by victory and that it must further educate the people in its support. This was confirmed by the general apathy during the elections of November 1933. That same month the Publicity Bureau was entrusted with the double task of discovering to what extent the October revolt had won the sympathy of the people and of popularizing the constitution in the provinces. Writers, speakers, and C.I.D. officials were enlisted for this purpose.

The majority of Siamese have always been and still are strongly monarchical in their sympathies, but there was surprisingly little interest or excitement at the time of the king's abdication. The Government's caution in withholding the relevant documents from publication lest they should disturb the public peace was scarcely justified in view of the country's failure to respond positively to the news. Nevertheless, in selecting a successor, the Government was careful to choose a child whose health would compel him to live far from his people and whose minority guaranteed a long period during which the new régime could firmly entrench itself.

When for the first time in accordance with constitutional procedure the Government resigned as a result of its defeat over the rubber restriction issue, the C.I.D. called the *tambol* representatives together to sound out their reactions.<sup>8</sup> They were asked if the people had ever expressed the view that the administration was unjust or communistic. To a man they replied in the negative. Apparently, local officialdom could not serve as a barometer of public opinion.

Perhaps this fact was behind the Government's attempts to decentralize the administration and to educate the people through local assemblies for a greater participation in politics. The results have been discouraging. The provincial officials who were summoned to the capital for re-education seemed definitely to prefer remaining there—to keep in touch with developments. Municipal and *changwad* assemblies have cost Tcs. 2,000,000 annually and have produced little in return in the way of valuable discussions. The same criticism has been justly leveled at the University of Moral and Political Sciences, but the civilian element has come to regard the political education of the masses in their democratic rights as their only safeguard against military encroachments.

The Government has been increasingly criticized in the Assembly and in the press for its failure to keep the people informed about important events, such as Luang Pradit's mission abroad and the actual accomplishments of the economic program. Asked by what methods it was making known the plethora of new laws in the provinces, which until then had been left in a blissful state of ignorance, the Government rather feebly replied that a cheaper edition of the *Gazette* was being printed and dispatched more quickly to the papers that subscribed to it. New laws were also being read over the radio. On an issue on which no definite policy had been reached, such as the method of elections, the Minister of the Interior said that the Government was consulting public opinion—by watching newspaper columns and opinion generally throughout the country.<sup>9</sup>

The inarticulateness and illiteracy of the masses is such that it is hard to gauge their reactions. On the negative side they are monarchical and traditionally accept the status quo on the ground that success spells divine approval. On the positive side they have contributed to national defense, particularly under the new régime. For the first time they seem to be aware that national enemies exist outside the country, but they are not clear as to exactly who they are. Much more clear to them is the effort the new Government is making to give them more roads, cooperative societies, and primary education. They concern themselves little about politics or the individual convictions to which the representative for whom they vote is committed. Most of those qualified to vote do not

do so; and even in Bangkok, Assembly meetings go unattended except when there is a scandal or the promise of a lively debate.

Inchoate and spasmodic as it is, the only public opinion that exists in Siam is found among the Bangkok intelligentsia. In general it may be said that when the new régime was first installed, most educated Siamese considered it corrupt and communistic; but the Boveradej revolt marked the turning point in public opinion, and since then the Government has received more general support. Despite its puerile discussions, the Assembly offers the only arena for national expression; and though it has in the past been too docile, it recently has shown more signs of lively opposition to the Government. As in the case of the even less evolved *changvad* assemblies, its value must not be judged by its present legislative output; it is chiefly significant as a vehicle for forming and guiding public opinion and as a political training field. The chief trouble with Siam is still its political apathy.

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According to a modern historian, W. A. Graham, the earliest distinct reference to Siam is probably that of Ptolemy in his geography of eastern Asia, dating from the second century after Christ, in which the ancient kingdom of Sri Vichaiya is called Samarade. The Chinese chronicles of the Siu dynasty, about 650 A.D., and of the Tang dynasty, compiled about the middle of the eleventh century, as well as *Kimtia Soktongchi*, the work of the Chinese emperor Kian-long on treaty relations with Siam, published in 1767, give important information that is of value in checking local Siamese histories.

The unreliability of Siam's own chronicles was picturesquely stated by no less an authority than King Mongkut, who declared them to be "full of fable and not in satisfaction for belief." Another more serious obstacle to research lies in the destruction of the official records and annals of the kings of Ayuthia by the Burmese in 1767. Only the attempts of the first kings of the Chakkri dynasty to collect the remnants have prevented Siam's even relatively recent past from becoming another Dark Ages. Unfortunately the compilers of this period failed to preserve the original manuscripts from which they worked.

For the kingdom of Sukhothai no written history has been discovered; and one has to depend on the chronicles of neighboring countries, a few ancient manuscripts, and three stone inscriptions, of which the most important is that of Ram Gamheng in 1492. These manuscripts include a book by Lady Nobhamat, the Brahman wife of a Sukhothai king, whose account of the country is probably only a revised version of an older book; a *History of the Statue of Buddha*, written in Pali (1457-1527); and *The History of Jinakalamalini* (1516) and *Charnadivivongs*, also written in Pali, which give details about the Chiengmai princes. The best bibliography on Siamese Buddhism was compiled by H. Alabaster, and

the most interesting contemporary commentary is that of J. B. Pratt.

In addition to these religious manuscripts, further sidelights are thrown on the history of Chiangmai by the *Northern Annals*, the collection ordered by King Yotfa in 1807, which comprised manuscripts relating to events that occurred before the building of Ayuthia and oral traditions of the various principalities later included in Bayab Circle. Prince Damrong finds this chronology unreliable but based on a solid substratum of fact. The great majority of documents in the Lao language have been published at different times in Bangkok, chiefly in the scholarly review, *Vajirana*, and have been compiled by Phya Prajakikakaracakra in a single volume called *Ruang Pongswadan Yonok*, published in 1908 at Bangkok. Although the author ably abridged the chaotic data, Camille Notton felt that he had not provided adequate notes or clearly indicated what he had omitted; he therefore reworked the material from the beginning.

In his *Annales du Siam*, Notton has translated and annotated the Chronicles of *Suanna Khamdeng*, *Suanna Korn Khan*, and *Sinhanavati*, comprising the first part of the historic texts in the Lao language, and the history of Laipun, the capital of Lanna, which was probably composed about 1646. The Siamese versions of the histories of Burma, Luang Prabang, and Cambodia, and especially the *Rajadhi raj*, or history of Pegu from 1268-1534, written at the end of the seventeenth century, have all served as amplifiers and verifiers of Lao works.

The *Pongswadan*, of which five versions are in existence, is a history of Ayuthia written by King Rama I. The two most familiar versions are that of Dr. Bradley (1863) and the Royal Autograph edition revised by Mongkut and printed in 1907 with notes by Prince Damrong. Both of these versions are taken from the work of Krom Somdet Paramanujit Jinorot, undertaken in the reign of Rama III, which was in turn derived from manuscript editions of the *Pongs* written in 1783 and 1795.

One of the few consistencies in all these versions is their inaccurate dating. In the old chronicles the eras were frequently changed, and no uniform system of dating was adopted. Chulalongkorn's attempt to elucidate these inconsistencies through the



work of the Royal Research Society resulted in the unearthing of a very important manuscript now known as the *Pongswaden of Luang Prasoet*. It was written by an official in 1680 under orders from Phra Narai, and it gives a brief history of the Ayuthian dynasty from 1350 to 1605. The outstanding feature of this account is that its dates are corroborated by those given in the annals of neighboring countries, and it has therefore come to be considered the standard history for the Ayuthian period.

For the Bangkok period, Chulalongkorn ordered Khun Bunnat to continue the account started by Prince Paramanujit, which was supplemented by the Official Gazette begun in the reign of Mongkut. The Chakkri dynasty, with a view to preserving the national traditions, also collected the country's laws in 1805 and asked qualified individuals to write their memoirs. The best known of these personal accounts are *The Defeat of the Annamites*, in poetical form, and the *Record of Princess Narindr Devi*, which Mongkut himself edited.

As to European accounts of Siam, the Portuguese, who were the first in the field, left many narratives of their explorations and conquests, in which Siam was only cursorily and not too accurately mentioned. The most famous of these Portuguese accounts, the *Peregrinations of Mendez Pinto*, first published in Lisbon in 1614, is an interesting but completely untrustworthy supplement to Ayuthian chronicles.

The contemporary accounts written by Schouten, Van Vliet, and Kaempfer, and the papers printed in the Dutch Records, many of which have been reproduced in the excellent modern work of Anderson, throw valuable light on seventeenth century Siam as seen by the most consistently favored of European traders.

Seventeenth century French writers are very numerous for the period of Phra Narai and the ensuing revolution. La Loubère was probably the outstanding writer from the viewpoint of accuracy, observation, and lack of bias. Among the religious and secular narratives that should also be read are those of Choisy, Forbin, Père Tachard, Chaumont, and the summary of Gervaise. In addition, there are the numerous and biased accounts of the revolution of 1688, such as those of Desfarges, Deslandes, Churchill, Volland des Verquains, Père d'Orléans, and the *Lettres Edificantes et Curieuses*.

Supplementary material may be found in the publications of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, the Archives Nationales, and the Ministère des Colonies, as listed by G. Coedès in the *Siam Society Journal* for 1921, and in the records of the *Société des Missions Etrangères*. Phra Narai was himself a great collector of annals, even sending envoys to China to buy what chronicles they could find there. He knew the States of Europe and often said that the art of governing was no divine gift but the result of experience and the study of other States. When he learned that the king of France would be interested in the annals of Siam, he gave a copy of them to Chaumont for Louis XIV.

It was not until the eighteenth century that English writers began to come into their own. In addition to the records of the East India Company, interesting accounts are given by two travelers, Thomas Herbert and Captain A. Hamilton, who visited all the countries of southeastern Asia between 1688 and 1723. They were followed by another Englishman, a merchant named Ralph Smith.

Nineteenth century accounts are far more numerous and varied. There are the narratives of the various official envoys: Crawford, Finlayson, Burney, and Bowring for the English, and Roberts, Ruschenberger, and Townsend Harris for the United States; of unofficial foreign residents in Siam, such as Neale and Mrs. Leonowens; of missionaries, such as Pallegoix, Gutzlaff, Bradley, Dodd, and McGilvary; of explorers and scientist-travelers, such as Bastien, Orléans, Garnier, Lagrée, Mouhot, Colquhoun, Hallet, Smyth, McCarthy, and Pavie; and of such scholars as Rosny, Fournereau, and Aymonier. All these works should be supplemented by a reading of the entertaining anecdotal narratives of European transients in Siam, such as Young, Jottrand, Campbell, and Thompson.

There are few qualified writers on contemporary Siam. Almost no specialists have made studies of individual problems, and the outstanding surveys that have been made were written by two Americans, C. Zimmerman and J. Andrews. Without their economic studies of pre- and post-depression Siam, our picture of the country would be very different. Zimmerman came to the country at the request of the International Council of Missions and started

work in the rural regions in December 1930 with the aid of government officials. Fifty families were studied in every village to represent the income range, and villages were chosen that were far from the administration center. Andrews' work, which followed Zimmerman's model, was a depression survey designed primarily to discover the causes of the fall in government revenues.

In general, the Siamese write little about their own country, with the notable exceptions of Prince Damrong, Prince Diloch, and Rama VI. There are, however, some interesting student magazines, especially *Samaggi Sara*. Some departmental reports have been issued, but they lapsed badly in the years following the revolution. Certain Siamese have written illuminating articles for exposition and propaganda purposes, notably in *Siam in the Twentieth Century* and *General and Medical*. Technical work is too often shelved or incompetently recorded. *The Record* was started because reports were apt to get lost, and this lack of publicity often resulted in a pointless duplication of many studies simply because the original project had been forgotten.

Among modern historians of ancient Siam the outstanding are Coedès, Credner, Frankfurter, Gerini, Hutchinson, Launay, Wales, and Wood—and the whole group of Siam Society scholars. In the economic field, in addition to technical reports like that of Thomas Ward, there are the two economic surveys of Zimmerman and Andrews, the British Economic reports, and *Siam: Nature and Industry*. For language and syntax one should consult Frankfurter, Pallegoix, and McFarland. The best legal authorities are Masao, Lingat, Guyon, Padoux, and Thornely. In the field of art the first authority is Reginald Le May, and secondarily Salmony; and the only scholarly work on the theatre that of René Nicolas. There is very little material on post-revolutionary Siam apart from the predominantly journalistic work of N. Sivaram, Baron de Lapomardè, and Lin Yu, and the thesis of Akulusana. A very recent and excellent monograph is that of K. P. Landon, *The Chinese in Thailand*.

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## MAJOR FOREIGN COMPANIES IN SIAM<sup>1</sup>

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### *Anglo-French Exploration Company*

This company has among its interests a tin property in southern Siam, which gives every indication of becoming one day a very large tin producer. Its high potential value has not been undermined by the fact that two years of study show considerable difficulties in the way of extraction.

### *Anglo-Siam Corporation*

This long-established forestry and general merchant company has headquarters in London and branches in Siam, Malaya, and India. Its liquid position is very strong in spite of the decline in the teak market, Japanese competition, and the higher tariffs imposed in Siam and the British Empire. The company is moderately capitalized but has an excellent dividend record. Dividends that were formerly 12½ per cent on ordinary shares have fallen in recent years to 7 per cent, but 10 per cent is still being paid on preferred stock. Nearly half the assets are represented by British government securities. Although its directors assert that the marketing of teak is going to be increasingly hard, business is still profitable. This corporation acts as agent for innumerable other companies.

### *Anglo-Siam Tin Syndicate*

This is a British company registered in the Straits Settlements under the Anglo-Oriental Company of Malaya. Its authorized capital is £60,000, and its chief mines are located at Bandinlan and Huey Yot in the peninsula.

### *The Asiatic Petroleum Company of Siam*

This company, which is incorporated in England with the Standard Oil Company, has until recently enjoyed, along with Shell Oil, a monopoly of fuel imports.

<sup>1</sup> The analyses of Siam's foreign companies and newspapers antedated the outbreak of the present war.

*Bangkok Dock Company*

This company, established in 1865, is the oldest in Siam. Its scope includes shipbuilding, general construction, and engineering. During the depression it had a hard time and became heavily indebted. Its splendid dock lay almost idle; owing to the rate of exchange and the high duty on paint, it was impossible for it to compete with Singapore and Hong Kong for even the most ordinary repairs. Its losses in 1931 amounted to Tcs. 503,152, but they were down the following year to Tcs. 27,040. In 1933 this company merged with United Engineers.

By 1937 its trading situation again became fairly satisfactory. There was a larger amount of construction, but very competitive conditions meant that there was little profit. The company's survival was largely due to its holding a number of valuable agencies, such as the Ford agency. That year it was able to declare a 4 per cent dividend, as against 2 ½ per cent for the previous year; but in 1938 its dividend lapsed to 2 ½ per cent. The Hong Kong dollar's depreciation worked adversely for this company, and some ships had to be withdrawn for lack of outward freight. The company feels that matters would improve if the Government would only compel the local registration and licensing of vessels in the coolie passenger trade between Siam and the southern Chinese ports and make them dock in Bangkok for inspection. In September 1938 the company launched the largest vessel it had ever built, and this again brought up the question as to why Siam should buy in Italy and Germany moderate-sized tonnage that she might better build herself at home.

*Bangrin Tin Dredging Company*

The headquarters of this English company are at Renong, and its position is very sound in spite of the low prices of its shares in 1933. Two years later this company was able to declare a 5 per cent dividend, and in 1937 it purchased 696 more acres of tin-bearing land. Work is done by three electrically driven dredges.

*Bangkok Manufacturing Company*

This company was founded in 1899 for the purpose of manufacturing ice for the capital. Later it launched into cold storage

and aerated waters and even had plans for a steam laundry and a rice mill. Started as an American company, it was found unworkable under American law in Siam. It was therefore incorporated as a British liability company since at that time there was no law governing limited liability enterprises in Siam and the companies registered under British law were working smoothly. Since this company's capital was almost entirely Siamese and its profits paid in Siam, it was thought better later to register it under Siamese law. It was the aerated waters department of this company that launched the career of Phya Bhakdi.

*Barrow Brown and Company, Ltd.*

This engineers' and merchants' enterprise was founded in 1917, and up to 1936 it paid a dividend of about 5 per cent. Since then, however, trading conditions have become increasingly competitive; and the company has been able to do little more than hold its own. For 1937-38 it was obliged to pay no dividends, and what few profits had been made were placed in reserve. This company has manifold agencies, but it is placing its chief hopes for the future in the Government's increasing interest in power farming.

*Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, Ltd.*

One of the most important lessees of the Siamese teak forests, this corporation has its head office in Bombay. Its situation is the same as that of the other teak companies in relation to market uncertainties and the Government's renewal of its lease. It has, in addition, important shipping interests.

*The Borneo Company*

Incorporated in England, this company, which deals principally in teak and rice, had agents in the north as early as 1860. It suffered, as did all trading companies, during the depression; but it had large reserves on which to draw. In 1932 and 1933 it passed its ordinary dividend and consequently reduced its expenses in Siam by 30 per cent. For a time it looked as if Japanese competition would make its curtailment permanent. Its chief exports are now teak and rubber, but it also has several local match factories. In 1937 it profited by a marked improvement in the price of teak, tin, rubber, and manufactured goods. Profits were the best since

1930; a 5 per cent dividend was paid in addition to dividends for two years' arrears. By 1938 it had caught up with its preferred stock dividends for 1936. Its general merchandise business is expanding, and it has been able to maintain its share in the internal trading of the country despite keen Japanese competition. On the whole, the Sino-Japanese conflict has proved less serious for this company than was feared. Profits continue, but they are absorbed in paying up back dividends.

#### *British-American Tobacco*

This famous company is incorporated in the Straits Settlements. It waxed prosperous by ousting native tobacco in favor of imported cigars and cigarettes. In 1929 a 25 per cent dividend was paid, which was reduced to 20 per cent during the depression years. Its stock has always been regarded as very secure. The Government is working through this company to further the growing of native tobacco.

#### *Christiana and Nielsen*

Danish in origin, this company is incorporated in Siam. These consulting engineers and contractors have just been awarded the important contract for the new dock at Bangkok. One of the directors is Mr. Christiansen, who has frequently been instrumental in forming the Siamese Government's commercial policy.

#### *Diethelm and Company*

This general merchant company is incorporated in Switzerland. Its activities include engineering and shipping, and its connections with the Netherlands Indies are important.

#### *East Asiatic Company Ltd.*

Copenhagen is still the main office for this Danish corporation, which was founded in 1897. Since Denmark lacked some of the essential facilities with which to conduct world trade, the company had to build up its own shipping department, which in time became the most important link in the whole organization. In 1933 its service was expanded to the north Pacific, and the next year to the Philippines, with a proportionate increase in profits. On the

strength of this expansion a Diesel motorship was ordered for the Straits-Siam route. This company was able to pay a 4 per cent dividend even during the depression, and to convey Tcs. 290,000 of its business, aggregating over a million tons, in its own ships. In 1935 a 6 per cent dividend was declared despite poor world trading conditions, which were reflected in the smaller quantity and variety of the goods transported. In 1937 the company's business expanded in all directions, and it has now twenty branches and many subordinate activities. Its annual average capital in the last forty years has been Kr. 31,010,598; and its profits history has been brilliant, averaging for almost half a century a dividend of over 14 per cent per annum.

*Louis T. Leonowens Ltd.*

The origin of this teak company is highly romantic. It dates from a harem friendship formed between King Chulalongkorn and the son of his English governess, which resulted in a gift of important teak leases. Leonowens followed the marital customs of the land of his adoption until late in life, when he married an English girl. Since both of the Leonowens felt that the money made from a Siamese industry should stay in the country, it has been willed to different local charities. In addition to its major teak interests the company engages in a medley of minor activities.

*Meklong Railroad Company, Ltd.*

This company's capital of Tcs. 1,784,000 is divided into 22,300 shares of Tcs. 80 apiece, and in proportion to its capitalization it has paid during the last few years a modest dividend of 2½ per cent. Profits and passengers depend upon the fluctuations of the fish catch.

*Menam Motor Boat Company Ltd.*

This Siamese company is vociferous in its complaints of an illegal competition that undermines its legitimate profits. It has nowadays a fleet of eighty-nine boats. The failure to pay dividends during the last few years has been attributed to the higher cost of fuel.



*Nawang Pet Tin Ltd.*

Formed in 1920, this company has a capital of \$ (Straits) 500,000 and shares its chairman with the Malay-Siamese Prospecting Company. Since for a number of years all the profits were spent in paying off old debts and in laying a new pipe line, no annual dividends could be paid. The restriction scheme permitted producing to 60 per cent of capacity, but disastrous floods put a stop to mining operations for three months. Compared with other mines, this company has suffered serious handicaps. Nevertheless, in 1935, the net profit was double that of the preceding year; and a 5 per cent dividend was paid despite two cuts in the quota. The capital was recently increased to \$ (Straits) 1,500,000.

*Pungah Tin Dredging Company*

This company is incorporated in the Federated Malay States as Austral Malay Tin Ltd. Unfortunately for this organization, both of its dredges were brought to the producing stage after many delays just when the bottom fell out of tin prices. As a result, the company's debt to Austral-Malay Tin was raised to the sum of £62,125; and for a number of years there were such small profits in working the mines that one dredge had to be closed down.

*Ramsay and Company*

This old and unique firm no longer exists, but it has had a very curious history. For years it held a privileged monopoly as army contractor and purveyor to the Government and Court. When King Chulalongkorn visited Calcutta in 1872, he invited one of the firms there, Ramsay and Company, to open up a branch in Siam under monopoly conditions and rent free. The newly established firm imported everything required by the civil or military service. In 1882 a department store was opened, but it failed shortly afterwards; and business was again restricted to Government contracts and ship chandlery, along with some exportation of Siamese products. Two years later another attempt was made to open a department store since it looked as if the larger European colony and the increased number of Siamese returned from abroad

would help it to succeed this time. But it went into liquidation again; and the German firm, B. Grimm, bought out its stocks. It was with these auctioned-off army supplies that a Siamese general defeated the Ho invaders in the northeast; the weapons of Ramsay and Company caused a panic among the invaders. Before his retirement in 1910, C. H. Ramsay rendered valuable services to the Government under the Minister of Finance in Chiangmai and in the peninsula. A subsidiary service was the training of Whiteway, who subsequently became famous for his department stores throughout the Orient.

#### *Renong Consolidated Tin Dredging Company*

This company has complained a number of times about the increase in working costs caused by the tin restriction agreement, and also about its assessment quota. Since Renong is situated far from the other dredging centers, it was found impossible to close down and pay off the native workers, who were given part-time work. The company, however, was not in a very precarious position as was shown by its ability to purchase additional property. For the year 1933 it reported profits amounting to £40,703, as compared with £17,050 for the preceding year.

*The Siam Cement Company* (Cf. Chapter on Industry, p. 441)

#### *Siam Electric Company*

The monopoly granted by the Government to the Siam Electric Company in 1901 was so complete that it was not made known to the public. In 1887 a concession for the first tramway in Bangkok was granted to J. Loftus and Admiral de Richelieu. That same year they transferred their concession with the Government's consent to an English company, which was incorporated under the name of the Bangkok Tramways Company. In 1892 that company was liquidated; and the concession was transferred to a Danish corporation, for which Richelieu and A. Westenholz got the concession in 1900. The Siam Electric Company was formed at Copenhagen in 1898, and two years later it absorbed the local Danish company. The shareholders complained vigorously of such cavalier treatment,

but the Siam Electric Company has safely gone ahead on the assumption that the average resident of Bangkok regards a shareholders' meeting in the same light as jury duty. It was once even proposed that a director's fee should be proportionate to the distance he had to travel to attend the meetings.

The Siam Electric Company rests contentedly on its remarkable laurels. The improvements it brought to a city filled with rickety vehicles, pony-trams, and kerosene lamps was striking. Handsome electric cars and lighting everywhere brought roads and bridges in their wake, even in the early twentieth century. The Government, mindful of this and of the amount of capital this company had placed willingly under Siamese jurisdiction, granted truly royal terms in its 1907 concession. In return for new tram-line concessions, the company undertook the task of watering the roads and affording fire protection to buildings along the tram routes.

In 1912 the major interest in this company was acquired by a Belgian syndicate. In the post-war period the capital of Tcs. 22,563,200 was held as follows: 25 per cent by Siamese, 60 per cent by Belgians, and 15 per cent by other nationalities. In 1934 a French group acquired an interest in the company. The company's capital has twice been substantially reduced.

In 1932 an official statement attributed the company's decreased earning capacity to the depression, to a reduction in the price of electric current, to the decreased use of electricity as a result of the closing down of a number of industrial plants, and to the competition of motor buses. Prolonged negotiations with the Government resulted in a new agreement, which is to last till 1950. Under this agreement tram fares and lighting rates have been reduced in return for protection from bus-line competition. The company's greatest loss was in the forced sale of the Paknam Railroad to the Government.

In the past eight years the earning capacity of this company has declined 100 per cent; and if this continues, the concession will be running at a loss by the time it expires. In spite of these recent troubles, the Siam Electric Company is still regarded as the outstanding example of a prosperous foreign enterprise in Siam; and it is consequently the butt of sharp attacks by those who are opposed on principle to foreign concessions.

*Siamese Tin Syndicate*

This British company is registered in England and owns various properties in Siam, on which three dredges are at work. The depression undermined the very favorable technical position this company was enjoying. But its financial status was sound enough to permit the purchase of promising properties at low prices, and the future may give substantial consolation for the absence of dividends in 1931-32.

In 1930 this company was able to pay only a 15 per cent dividend as compared with 30 per cent the year before. Two years later a 10 per cent dividend was declared. Restriction measures limited the production capacity to three-fifths, but there were still surplus stocks to liquidate. During the depression, the policy of acquiring new properties greatly prolonged the prosperity of this organization. It holds a large interest in the Bangrin Tin Dredging Company. A 25 per cent dividend was declared in 1936, and the next year it rose to 45 per cent. The mines now run by this company are Ngow, Takuapa, and Kopah, as well as Huey Moot on the east coast. A cautious policy as regards taxes is reflected in its dividend policy. Not all of its enormous profits are divided, but new areas are acquired. In 1938 it was able to pay a 65 per cent dividend for the year, in addition to acquiring new tin lands.

*The Siam Steam Navigation Company*

Founded in 1883, this company was incorporated in Siam. Regular transportation along the coast was inaugurated by H. N. Anderson, founder of the East Asiatic Company, which further developed its activities. It shuttled back and forth between the East Asiatic and a Siamese company until it came to rest with the former in 1908. Ten years later two new steamers were built for the Bangkok-Singapore run, and services are still maintained to all the important Siamese ports both for cargo and passengers. This company transports between 150,000 and 200,000 tons of cargo and from 35,000 to 40,000 passengers annually. After twenty-five years of activity it ceased to pay dividends during the depression. In 1937, in common with so many other companies in Siam, it showed a marked improvement. The resumption of dividend pay-

ments is still in the future, but the prospects are far brighter today than for some time past. It is now a branch of the Straits Steamship Company.

#### *The Siam Steam Packet Company*

The history of this company has been one long complaint against illegal competition, which in recent years has taken on a strongly nationalistic cast. Some of the vernacular papers have tried to stir up bad feeling against this concern as a *farang* company that no patriotic Siamese should patronize. Since the original promoters registered this company in Singapore, it is technically British; but its directors point out that the greater part of the capital in Siam and much of the stock is owned by Siamese philanthropic institutions. They stress also the pioneer work it did in improving its service, even though the up-country people were and are so poor that they cannot do much traveling. The company claims that three Siamese launch-owners have combined to lower prices absurdly—*atical* for a two-day trip. But the Siamese competitors defend themselves by saying that rate-cutting is and has always been started by the Steam Packet Company, whose ultimate aim is to wipe out Siamese competition; and that it has practically succeeded in so doing at Petriu and Ratburi. The 3 per cent dividend that this company has been paying for the last few years does not represent all the profits, which have been partially put into new launches and into the building up of reserves. [For the latest developments in the history of this company, see Introduction, p. xx]

#### *The Southern Tin Dredging Company*

This company was formed in 1933 with an authorized capital of £200,000. It has acquired 707 acres of alluvial land near Ronpibon and is using modern bucket dredging.

#### *The United Engineers*

Formed in 1912 to take over the business of Howarth Erskine Ltd. and Riley Hargreaves, this company prospered with the growth of the Malayan industries, with which the original companies were affiliated. In prosperous years new properties and reserves were built up in Siam, but even with so cautious a policy

the company had a hard time weathering the 1921 depression. The slump in 1930 resulted in the closing of some of the company's branches and its fusion with the Bangkok Dock Company, in whose capital this company holds shares. Many stockholders objected to the company's landed properties and wanted them eliminated. Engineering, it was claimed, should be the major interest, and directors who had too many interests in rival companies should be removed. In 1933 this company merged with the Bangkok Dock.

# SIAMESE NEWSPAPERS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Date Founded</i>	<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Political Attitude</i>
<i>Pracha Jati</i> (The Nation)	1932	about 6,000	Favors present régime, neutral towards foreign countries; conservative.
<i>Srikrung</i> (Metropolis)	1932	unknown	Sensational, neutral towards foreign countries.
<i>Naew Thai</i> (Outlook of the Thai People)	1937	unknown	Not yet defined.
<i>Krungdeb Varasab</i> (Bangkok Opinion)	1932	about 5,800	Critical of present régime, neutral towards foreigners.
<i>Dao Nakorn</i> (City Star)	1933	about 3,000	Organ of the military faction, inclined to be sensational. Little political, commercial, or police news.
<i>Doed Rathadharmanum</i> (The Constitutionalist)	1934	about 5,000	Favors present régime; nationalistic.
<i>Issara</i> (Independent)	1931	about 3,000	Liberal.
<i>Khao Siam</i> (Siam News)	1934	about 4,500	Nationalistic.
<i>Phadung Jati</i> (The Nation's Preserver)	1936	about 2,000	Liberal.
<i>Pramuan Wan</i> (The Day's News)	1936	about 6,700	Conservative, reactionary.
<i>Rasara</i> (The People)	1936	unknown	Liberal, progressive.
<i>Sao Siam</i> (Miss Siam)	1934	unknown	Conservative.
<i>Siam Nakorn</i> (Siam City)	1936	about 2,000	Sister paper to the <i>Chronicle</i> ; liberal, progressive.
<i>Siam Rasdr</i> (Siam Citizen)	1932	unknown	Cheap edition of the <i>Srikrung</i> .
<i>Sri Wan</i> (Good News)	1936	about 2,500	Moderate.
<i>Thai Mai</i> (New Siam)	1930	about 8,000	Commercial.

## CHINESE NEWSPAPERS

<i>Tong Hua Min Pao</i>	1911	about 5,000	Labor organ, little foreign news.
<i>Wah Sen Yit Pao</i>	1934	about 7,000	Liberal.
<i>Woh Kiew Yit Pao</i>	1929	about 6,000	Liberal.
<i>Hwa Siew Yer Pao</i>	1935	about 1,000	Liberal.
<i>Min Kok Yit Pao</i>	1935	about 5,000	Conservative.
<i>Bangkok Morning News</i>	1934	about 5,000	Conservative.

## SIAMESE PERIODICALS

<i>The Record</i>	Founded 1921 to publicize the work of the Board of Commercial Development; includes a Technical and Scientific Supplement.
<i>Khao Baedya</i>	Red Cross Magazine and Journal of the Medical Association of Siam.
<i>Sridharmarak Suksa</i>	Ethical exhortations.
<i>Vidya Charya</i>	Magazine of the Suan Kularb College and the teachers' magazine.
<i>Sarasasna</i>	Organ of the Roman Catholic Mission.
<i>Thai Kashem</i>	Fiction, cartoons, religious and dramatic articles, and the latest Siamese laws.
<i>Nari Nadh</i>	Siamese women's magazine, founded about 1930.
<i>Vidyusarn</i>	Radio magazine.
<i>Phadung Khwam Ru</i>	Founded in 1931 by the editor of the former <i>Siamese Review</i> .
<i>Tamruet</i>	Police magazine founded in January 1931.
<i>Kasikorn</i>	Agricultural review brought out for four years by Prince Siddhiporn and continued by the Department of Agriculture.
<i>Pradipakorn</i>	Magazine of Bangkok Christian College.
<i>Taharn Bok</i>	Army magazine.
<i>Chula Chakrasara</i>	Founded 1937 under royal patronage to encourage Siamese literature. No political works are accepted.
<i>Silipakorn</i>	Founded July 1937, magazine of the Fine Arts Bureau.
<i>Siam Today</i>	Issued by the Publicity Bureau in English, beginning July 1936.

In 1938 two new publications were projected by the military authorities, and a fortnightly on local affairs by the Bangkok Municipality.



## SIAMESE WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

1863

- 4 pees = 1 fuang
- 2 fuangs = 1 salung
- 4 salungs = 1 baht or tical
- 4 bahts = 1 tamlung
- 20 tamlungs = 1 chang
- 50 changs = 1 hap
- 100 hap = 1 tara

1921 decree

- 1 tical = 15 grams
- 1 catty = 80 ticals
- 1 picul or hap = 60.48 kilos or  $133\frac{1}{3}$  lbs.
- 1 wa = 2 meters
- 1 sen = 40 meters
- 1 sok = 50 centimeters
- 1 keup = 25 centimeters
- 1 hiu = 2.083 centimeters
- 1 kuren = 16 piculs of paddy rice and 22 piculs of cargo rice
- 1 rai =  $\frac{2}{5}$  of an acre

## FOOTNOTES

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# INDEX

- Albuquerque, 210  
 alcohol, 447-9  
   tax on, 547  
 Annamites, 13  
 Ananda, 97  
 Andrews Report, xiii, 329, 362, 387, 441  
 Anglo-French Agreement of 1896, 163  
 Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909, 165-8  
 animal husbandry, 330  
   draft animals, 331-3  
 anti-Japanese boycott, 122  
 art, Siamese  
   cinema, 755-6  
   history, 746-51  
   language, 758-62  
   literature, 762-3  
   music, 756-8  
   poetry, 763-9  
   theatre, 751-5  
 Asoka of Magadha, 18  
 Assembly, 246-8  
 aviation, 511-14  
 Ayuthia, 23  
   Japanese colony, 123-4  
   Siege of, 27  
  
 Ballestier, 31  
*Bangkok Daily Mail*  
   re Luang Pradit, 74  
 Bangkok, port of, 521-4  
   public works, 535-40  
*Bangkok Times*  
   re *coup d'état*, 74  
 banking, 590-8  
   laws, 596-7  
 banks, exchange, 590-4  
   savings, 594-6  
   National Siamese, 597-8  
 basketry, 445  
 Baxter, James, 578  
  
 Belgium  
   exports from, 214  
   first treaty, 213  
   imports from Siam, 214  
   relations with, 213-14  
 beriberi, 704-5  
 Blood and Iron Society, 117  
 Bovaradej Revolt, 79-82  
 Bowring, Sir John, 8, 105-6  
   Treaty, 158-9, 222  
 bricks, 449-50  
*British Trade Review*, 127  
 Brooke, Sir James, 32, 35  
   mission, 157-8  
 Buddhism, 17, 138, 233, 235, 623  
   economic role, 627-30  
   in the modern state, 636-46  
   organization, 625-7  
   social role, 630-5  
   with Christianity, 635-6  
 bureaucracy, 236-48  
   civil service, 242-6  
   *mantri*, 236-9  
   provincial administration, 239-42  
   *senapati*, 236-9  
   Sukhothai, 239  
   the Assembly, 246-8  
 Burney Mission, 150-4  
 Burney Treaty, 35, 153-4, 221  
  
 Cabinet crisis of 1931, 59  
 Cambodia, xx-xxx, 24, 137  
 capital, 583-90  
   foreign, 587-9  
 carpentry, 445  
 Catholic Mission, 646-55  
 Cavanaugh, Governor, 155-6  
 cement, 451-2  
 centralization of Siam, 45



- Chakkri, 28  
     dynasty, 31-8  
 Chandler, 201-2  
*changwad* councils, 252-4  
 Chao-Nam, 9, 11  
 Chaumont Mission, 176-9  
 Cheek, Dr. M. A., 204-5  
 Chihntu, 102  
 child welfare, 690-1  
 China  
     diplomatic relations, 118-20  
     relations with Chinese in Siam, 116-18  
     relations with Siam, 102-23  
     trade relations, 120-3  
 Chinese Economic Mission, 119-21  
 Chinese immigrants, 107-9, 114-15, 123  
     discrimination against, 122-3  
     schools in Siam, 109  
 cholera, 705  
 Christianity, 635-6  
     Catholic Mission, 646-55  
     Protestant Missions, 655-  
 Chulalongkorn, 39-49  
     attitude toward Chinese, 108  
     centralization of Siam, 45-48  
     Siam-Belgian treaty, 213  
 Chulalongkorn University, 773  
 Church of Siam, 667-9  
 cinema, 755-6  
 Civil and Commercial Code, 53, 55  
 civil service, 242-6  
 climate, 5-6  
 coal, 343  
 coconuts, 406-10  
 Code of Manu, 267-70  
 communications, 494-531  
     aviation, 511-14  
     post, 527  
     railroads, 497-505  
     roads, 505-11  
     rural districts, 531-5  
     telephone and telegraph, 527-31  
     water, 514-20  
 Compulsory Education Law, 776  
 Constitution, 68-70  
 Constitutional Régime  
     Buddhism, 638-46  
     Constitutional Régime (*continued*)  
         education under, 777, 785-7  
         financial policy, 555  
         Franco-Siamese Relations, 193-4  
         justice, 283-9  
         missions, under, 669-72  
         press, 795-800  
         cooperative credit movement, 378-80  
         copper, 341-2  
         cotton, 394-7  
         *coup d'état* of 1932, 62-70  
         courts, consular, 273  
             international, 273  
         Crawford, John, 31-3, 146-9  
         Crawford Mission, 29  
         Credner, Dr. W., 15  
         crime, 276-8, 697  
         crops, 7, 356-7  
             miscellaneous, 402-4  
         currency, 566-79  
             Gold Standard Act of 1908, 570  
             Paper Currency Act, 571-3  
         Currency Act of 1928, 58  
         customs duties, 543-5, 548-9  
             department, 562-4  
  
*Daily Express*  
     report of Japanese spies, 129  
 Danish East India Company, 214  
 Debt Redemption Fund, 555  
 Denmark  
     relations with, 214-15  
     treaty of 1913, 215  
 Devaraja, 233  
 Devawongse, Prince, 39  
     Regent of Siam, 55  
*dharmasatra*, 267  
 diet, 712-15  
 disease, 698, 725  
 Dutch  
     conquest of the Celebes, 208  
     East India Company, 220  
     exports to Siam, 210  
     trade, 125-6, 138  
     treaty with Siam, 208  
 dyeing, 443-4  
  
 education  
     funds, 779

Education (*continued*)

- government control, 778
- higher, 784-5
- of women, 779
- physical, 784
- primary, 778-9
- secondary, 780-2
- students abroad, 785-6
- vocational, 782-3
- Elections of November 1933, 82
- Elections of November 1937, 96-7
- electricity, 453
- European powers
  - trade relations with, 24-5, 30
- expenditures, royal, 544
- exports, 146
- extraterritoriality, 142, 218-32
  - Bowring Treaty, 222
  - missionaries, 221
  - treaty of 1664, 220
  - treaty of 1685, 220
  - treaty of 1909, 226
  - treaty with the United States, 221
  - treaty with United States of 1920, 227-9
- family life, 685-6
- farmer's indebtedness, xi, 381-91
  - costs and incomes, 391-4
- farming technique, 357-8
  - power farming, 360-1
- fertilizer, 358-9
- feudality, 673-5
- fisheries, 327-9, 477-9
  - Andrews Report, 329
  - Smith, Dr. Hugh, 328, 477
- foreigners in Siam, 218, 229-31
- forest products, 335
  - bamboo, 337
  - charcoal, 338
  - rattan canes, 336
  - tanning bark, 338
  - teak, 339-41
- Fortnightly Review*
  - policy of Malay States, 164
- France, 168-97
  - Chaumont Mission, 176-9
  - East India Company, 178
  - extraterritoriality, 178

France (*continued*)

- La Loubère's Mission, 179-81
- Mission to Siam, 168-70, 221
- Siamese Embassy to, 174-5
- freemen, 675-8
- fuel, 348-52
  - Liquid Fuel Act of 1939, 351
- Fullerton, Robert, 150-4
- gaming, 693-7
- gems, 346-7
- Germany
  - relations with, 197-8
- glass, 452
- gold, 343-5
- gold standard, 120
  - Act of 1908, 570
- government
  - agriculture, 374-8
  - and labor, 610-19
  - changwad* councils, 252-4
  - control of education, 778
  - Lao States, 255-66
  - local, 249-66
  - municipal councils, 254-5
  - municipalities, 251-5
  - regionalism, 255-66
  - provinces, 249-50
  - village, 250-1
- Great Britain
  - relations with, 140-168
  - treaty of 1897, 163
  - treaty relations with, 31
- Hague Convention
  - opium sale, 728
- handicrafts, 441-2
  - dyeing, 443-4
  - lacquer, 444-5
  - weaving, 442-3
- Harris, Townsend, 37, 200-2
- health, economic aspect, 715-17
- Hinduism, 138
- hog-raising, 333-4
- Hood, James, 202-3
- hookworm, 708-9
- Hunter, Robert, 31, 149, 158
- hygiene, 698-700, 709-12

imports, 121, 146, 425-30, 548-9

Incident of 1893, 188-9

Indian

labor in Siam, 139

relations, 137-40

trade, 138

Indo-China, xxii-xxx

insanity, 692-3

iron, 341

irrigation, xii, 514-20

Italy, 216-17

Japan

defender of Siam, 127

exports, 129

extraterritorial rights, 127

imports, 129

relations with Siam, 123-37

"ships of the red seal," 123

Siam Society, 128

trade, 125-37, 138

treaty of 1937, 136

judges, 271

juvenile delinquency, 690-1

Kamuko, 9-10

Karens, 10-11

Katon Luang, 8-9

Khmer alphabet, 20

people, 13

King

duties of, 233-5

succession, 235

Korat plateau, 4-5

Kra Canal, 130-3

Captain Cunningham-Reid, 130-1

Sir John Simon, 130

Kublai Khan, 16, 20

Kui, 11

labor, 138, 599-619

and government, 610-19

free, 600

costs, 607-10

slave, 599-600

regional, 602-7

lacquer, 444-5

Lahu, 12

lakh, 675

La Loubère's Mission, 179-81

Lancaster, 40

Land Registration Department, 315-16

land tenure, 313

Rangsit area, 318-19

language, 8, 758-62

Lao Mission, 661-3

Lao States, xx-xxx, 255-66

Laos, 17

law, 267-70

administration, 270-6

codification, 278-83

Constitutional Régime, 283-9

enforcement, 276-8

international courts, 273

prison reform, 289-91

sanitary measures, 276

Lawa, 10

Laws of Manu, 23

lead, 342

leather, 452-3

Leonowens, Mrs., 35-8

leprosy, 706-8

Ling Ping, Dr.

Chinese Economic Mission, 120

Lissu, 12

literature, 762-3

loans, foreign, 553, 579-83

Lord Salisbury, 163-4

Lu, 17

Luang Prabang, 19

Luang Pradit, 61, 70, 74

Communist Party, 85

Malaria, 702-3

matches, 450-1

Medical Law, 53

amended, 58

medicine

and education, 717-25

European, 700-2

Mekong, 187, 190, 196

Menam Bar, 521-4

metal work, 445-6

Miaos, 12

military organization, 292-4

European influence, 298

Trailok, 292

- mission
  - Catholic, 646-55
  - press, 788-9
  - Protestant, 655-72
- missionaries, 221
- Monarchy
  - duties of king, 233-5
- Mongkut, 34-9, 160, 201
- Mongol immigrants, 8
- Morgan, John, 145-6
- municipal councils, 254-5
- music, 756-8
  
- Nan-Chao, 15-16
- Nang Klao, 31-2, 34
- narcotic drugs, 737-9
- Naresuan the Great, 23-4
- National Siamese bank, 597-8
- Nationalist Party, 71-2
- Naval Ministry, 299
- navy, 298-9
- Neale, Frederick, 31-2
- Netherlands
  - relations with, 207-10
- New York Orient Mining Co., 205
- Norman, Sir Henry, 41, 43
  
- oil, xvii, xviii, 349-52
- oil-seeds, 406-10
- opium
  - contraband trade, 732-7
  - distribution, 728-31
  - Geneva Agreement of 1925, 729
  - Hague Convention, 728
  - international aspect, 727-8
  - monopoly, 726-7
  - narcotic drugs, 737-9
  - preventive measures, 731-2
  - production, 737
  - revenues, 728
  - smoking, 739-43
- Opium War, 34
  
- Palatine Law of 1458, 673
- Pallu, François, 168-75
- paper, 483-5
- Paper Currency Act, 571-3
- Pavie, Auguste, 186-8
- Penang, 145, 149
  
- People's Party, 62
  - Executive Council, 65-6
- Phaulkon, 26, 142, 173-6
- Phra Narai, 25, 144
  - French Mission, 170-1
  - letter to Chaumont, 177
- Phra Pitraya, 181-3
- Phra Ruang, 19
- Phya Bakol, 77-9
- Phya Mano, 65, 70-6
- Phya Tak, 27-8
- plague, 708
- poetry, 763-9
- population, 320-5
  - distribution, 323-5
- Portugal, 22, 25
  - relations with, 210-13
  - trade with, 211-13
- post, 527-31
- pottery, 446
- poultry, 333-4
- prai*, 675
- Prajadhipok, 55-62
  - abdication, 87-8
- Prasat Tong, 25, 125
- press
  - mission, 788-9
  - foreign language, 789-90
  - vernacular, 790-4
  - constitutional régime, 794-800
- prison conditions, 272
  - reform, 289-91
- prostitution, 686-90
- Protestant missions, 655-72
  - Church of Siam, 667
  - expansion, 660-1
  - government cooperation, 663-7
  - history of, 656-60
  - Lao mission, 661-3
  - under Constitutional Régime, 669-72
- provincial administration, 239-42
- public opinion, 800-6
  
- railroads, 497-505
- Ram Gamheng, 20
- Rama I, 28
- Rama VI, 52-5
- Rama Tibodi, 20
- rattan canes, 336

- regionalism, 255-66
- Revenue Code of 1939, xii, 566
- Revolution of 1688, 181-3
- rice, 353-5, 356
  - distribution, 362-4, 366-9
  - export, 361-4
  - foreign marketing, 369-74
  - milling, 364-6
  - mills, 446-7
- Rice Control Act, 53
- roads, 505-11
- Roberts, Edmund, 200
- Rolin-Jacquemyns, 213
- rubber, 479-83
- rural districts, 531-5
- Russia, 217-18
  
- salt, 345-6
- sawmills, 446-7
- Semang, 7-9
- Shans, 17
- Shipping, xviii-xvix
- Siamese Communist Party, 85
- Siamese Question, 160-2, 190
- Siamo-Japanese Treaty, 44
- Siamo-Dutch treaty of 1664, 142
- silk, 485-6
- silver, 120, 123
- Simon, Sir John
  - Kra Canal, 130
- Smith, Dr. Hugh, 328
- social units, 678-9
- Songtam the Just, 25, 124
- Spain, 217
- spices, 400-1
- sticklac, 404-6
- sugar, 146, 486-90
- suicide, 692-3
- Sukhothai, Kingdom of, 19, 20
- Su-lee Ku Society, 107
- sway*, 541, 675
- Switzerland, 215-16
  
- tabarn*, 292-303
- tariff, 546-9
- tax reform, 552
  - income, 554
- taxes, 541-6, 550-5
  - transit duties, 543
  
- teak, xvi, 339-41, 467
  - government policy, 470-7
  - market, 475-7
  - trade, 474-5
- telephone and telegraph, 527-31
- theatre, 751-5
- Thomas, Père, 173
- tin, 347-8, 542
- Tins, 9-10
- tin-mining, 453-67
  - government control, 459-67
  - legislation, 457-9
- tobacco, 397-400
- trade
  - balance, 430-2
  - depression, 432-6
  - foreign, 417-25, 439-40
  - in livestock, 334-5
  - internal, 411-12
  - overland, 414-17
  - royal, 542-3
- Trailok, 21-2
  - bureaucracy, 235
  - land tenure, 313-20
  - provincial administration, 240-1
- transport, 494-531
  - railroads, 497-505
- Treaties of 1902 to 1907, 190-2
- Treaty of 1893, 189-90
- Treaty of 1925, 192-3
- tuberculosis, 709
- tungsten, 342
  
- United States,
  - Cheek case, 204-5
  - decline of trade, 200
  - relations with, 199-207
  
- Vajiravudh, 49-51
  - Wild Tigers, 49, 51
  
- war
  - First World, 51-5
- water supply, 524-7
  - conservation, 353-4
- weaving, 442-3
- white elephant, 22-3
- Wild Tigers, 49, 51

Wolfram, 342-3

women

education of, 779-80

status of, 679-84

Yamada Nagamasa, 124

Yaos, 12

Yatabe

Kra Canal, 131

Yec Heng Society, 107

Y.M.C.A., 691-2

Yuan, 13

Yunnan state, 16

*Ywajon*, 308-9

